



WOOD PELLET INDUSTRY THREATENS FORESTS, CLIMATE, & COMMUNITIES

Impacts on Forests

The wood pellet industry destroys **tens of thousands of acres of forests**, which are cut down, turned into wood pellets, and shipped to Europe and Asia to be burned for energy. North Carolina is the country's largest pellet exporter, sending 2.5 million tons of wood pellets per year overseas

When our forests are destroyed, their climate and community benefits disappear. Their ability to store carbon and absorb flood water is greatly reduced.

Climate Impacts

Numerous scientific studies have confirmed that **burning trees releases more greenhouse gas emissions per unit of electricity compared to coal, and is worse for the climate than burning coal** - particularly over the crucial years ahead.^[1] Increased carbon dioxide concentrations from burning wood remain in the atmosphere for decades or more. The urgency of the climate crisis demands that we dramatically scale up forest protection. Forests draw carbon out of the atmosphere and store it in trees and soil. **Now, more than ever, we need standing, diverse, healthy forests and wetlands to store carbon, protect us from flooding and storms, and provide us with clean air and water.**



Community and Economic Impacts

Wood pellet facilities impact communities with **increased truck traffic on small roads, dangerous air pollution, dust, constant noise, and a degraded landscape.**

A recent report by Environmental Integrity Project shows a shocking pattern of air quality violations or noncompliance at wood pellet facilities.^[2] The industry has been the subject of lawsuits regarding their unlawful air pollution and has only agreed to install pollution controls at their Richmond and Sampson County facilities after being taken to court.^[3]

The production of wood pellets creates harmful particulate matter, volatile organic compounds that create smog, and other hazardous pollutants.

Communities living at the frontlines of forest destruction are often the same ones who are most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

Environmental Justice communities - those with incomes below the state median and more than 25% people of color - **are twice as likely to have a wood biomass pellet production facility** than other communities.^[4] These communities face pollution and destruction of their forests, and do not benefit economically.

The wood pellet industry has not improved the local economies where it has plants. In Northampton County, NC, Enviva Pellets, LLC opened a plant in 2013. Since that time, the poverty rate has actually increased from 26.3 percent to 28.5 percent.^[5]



TAKE ACTION: STAND FOR FORESTS AND COMMUNITIES

Attend the Public Meeting on March 16th in Lumberton NC

Active Energy Group, a publicly traded British company, is applying for an air permit to operate a torrefied wood pellet production facility in Lumberton, NC. The production of torrefied wood pellets has not been proven to be effective anywhere in the US. The process is extremely dangerous, with explosions and fires occurring frequently.. Troublingly, the company has applied for a capacity of nearly 40,000 tons per year, but they have indicated intentions to produce 10x that much- 400,000 tons per year by 2021. Residents of Robeson County already live with several polluting industries and the county is ranked worst in the state for health outcomes.

NC DEQ should not make Robeson County a testing ground for this unpredictable technology.

Attend the Public Meeting:

WHAT: Public Meeting on Active Energy facility in Lumberton

WHEN: Monday March 16 at 6:00pm

WHERE: Bill Sapp recreation Center, 1100 N. Cedar St., Lumberton

Ask Governor Cooper and NC DEQ to grant a 90 day extension to the public comment period of Registration Number 10636R00 to allow NC DEQ, local officials, and impacted residents time to fully research and understand the currently unknown impacts of this technology on air quality, carbon emissions, and local pollution.



References

1. <https://on.nrdc.org/1Uc74qh>
2. <https://bit.ly/2jXemBR>
3. <https://bit.ly/2XbCW7Z>
4. <https://bit.ly/2D5vGOO>
5. <https://bit.ly/2YDq738>