

Biomass & Pollution



Biomass, or bioenergy, creates energy by burning living materials like plants and trees. The wood pellet industry uses trees to make wood pellets. It then ships them to Europe and Asia and burns them in power plants to create electricity. **Wood pellet plants are as dirty and problematic as coal plants.**

Making wood pellets creates a lot of pollutants, including particulates (fine dust), carbon monoxide, nitrogen, and other hazardous air pollutants. Pollutants like these cause many health problems. Fine dust, called PM2.5, is especially harmful. PM2.5 can get into lungs and bloodstreams. **PM2.5 can hurt lung function, worsen asthma, and cause heart attacks and premature death.**

Pellet production plants also release volatile organic compounds (VOCs). **VOCs cause health problems for children, the elderly, and people with asthma or COPD.**



The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) calls some VOCs hazardous air pollutants (HAPs). This includes chemicals like acetaldehyde, formaldehyde, and methanol. HAPs are chemicals which are toxic or can cause cancer, even in small amounts. **HAPs cause health problems for children, the elderly, and people with asthma or COPD.**

People living next to pellet plants often have lower life expectancy and poorer health. The American Heart Association says: "Short-term exposure to small particulate matter can trigger cardiovascular-disease mortality and illness; long term exposure reduces life expectancy up to a few years."

If you're living near a wood pellet plant, you deserve to know your risks. Learn more about what you can do to prevent further damage to your lungs and your community at the link below.



Find out more at dogwoodalliance.org/biomass-pollution