

## **Statements from Community Partners for the EPA Press Conference**

Statement from Mrs. Kathy Eglund of Gulfport, MS, Co-founder of the Education, Economics, Environmental, Climate and Health Organization (EEECHO), National Board Member of the NAACP:

“Enviva in Lucedale, Mississippi is home to the world’s largest wood pellets manufacturing facility. The Drax Amite Bioenergy plant in Gloster, Mississippi was fined two and a half million dollars for illegal levels of toxic emissions of dangerous chemicals such as particulates (PM<sub>2.5</sub>), violative organic compounds (VOCs), nitrogen oxide (NOx), carbon monoxide (CO), carbon dioxide, methanol, and formaldehyde. The small town of Gloster - population 878 - with a whopping 64.1% of its Black residents living in poverty, had no idea their community had been exposed to these high levels of toxins. These two plants were permitted as a low source emissions, claiming an intent to emit below the 250 tons that would have allowed additional EPA oversight protection. However, wood pellets facilities have historically emitted well beyond their permitted limits.

Wood bioenergy corporations like Enviva and Drax have disproportionately located their facilities in economically depressed states within environmental justice communities. They’re getting massive subsidies for this technology under the misguided attempt of providing a safer, cleaner alternative to fossil fuels. However, in reality, many scientists have warned that the use of wood biomass is not a viable energy alternative because it produces as much, if not more, emissions than coal. This process is harmful to both people and the planet. We must end our willingness to sacrifice and re-imperil the very same people already disproportionately bearing the brunt of climate impacts and pursue a more just, carbon free renewable energy transition to achieve our much needed 1.5C mandate.

Statement from Ms. Belinda Joyner, Concerned Citizens of Northampton County and NC Coalition Against Wood Pellets:

“They say a picture is worth a Thousand Words. Now you're seeing this Picture face to face. Put yourself in these PEOPLE’s place and ask yourself is this the LIFE you want to live DAY to DAY.

Money isn't everything so STOP putting PROFIT over PEOPLE. Everybody deserves to live a life free from HARM caused by something they have NOTHING to do with.

HELP!!!! HELP!!!!!! HELP!!!!!!”

Statement from Reverend Michael Malcom of Birmingham, Alabama, Executive Director of the People’s Justice Council and Alabama Interfaith Power & Light:

To be a prophet is not a call to foretell, it is a call to forthtell. In essence, it the job of the prophet to see what is going on in society and to report on what has been seen. Beloved, today I write to you as a prophet to report on what I’ve witnessed in my travels when visiting with communities

who have experienced the assault of biomass producing facilities. These often black, underserved, and under-resourced communities are located rural areas with little or no attention. It was taught to me that you can tell who one is by the way they act when no one is looking. According to the actions of Drax Biomass in Gloster, MS they are not good neighbors. And, according to the action and inaction by the local government, they're in on it. This is one of many cases that we have seen throughout our travels. This is one community of many throughout the south that suffer at the hands of these outside interest groups of polluters. Drax was fined due to an outside group stepping in to show concern for the citizens of Gloster. However, how many communities are suffering the same without care or concern?

Statement from Commissioner Erniko Brown, South Carolina, Executive Director of Organized Uplifting Resources & Strategies (OURS), ECJ Chair SC NAACP, & Director of Organizing and Partnership Engagement for Dogwood Alliance:

The claim of biomass as a renewable resource is adversely affecting our southern communities. Through the promise of job creation and introduction of waste by products we are becoming increasingly ill and impoverished. The invasion of the biomass industries has become progressively frustrating and we feel as though we have been suffering in silence at the hands of greed. As we become more aware of the power of our voices, we realize we are able to move the meter of equality. We stand together here today, as supporters in unity to say that we have had enough of being ignored and silenced.

Today, we are calling for the concern of our elected officials. We are calling for the care of our communities. We need cumulative impact studies for these facilities. We need to ensure that existing facilities go through this process and mitigation be paid for by the polluter. We demand that the polluters pay for the care of the community that is impacted. And, we call for the federal government to recategorize biomass as a non-renewable resource. In the south, we celebrate our community and the environment. We demand that policies and protections be implemented so that this continues for generations to come.