

Angus, Briony (EEA)

From: Dawn PiersGamble [DPiersGamble@GRSD.ORG]
Sent: Monday, August 27, 2007 3:52 AM
To: Angus, Briony (EEA)
Subject: Stopping the Proposed Russell Biomass

Dear Secretary Bowles:

I want express my opposition to the Russell Biomass proposal, EOE # 13635 currently under review by your office through the Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) process. I think this is the wrong plant in the wrong place, and request that you seriously consider several major siting issues in your review of the proposal. This massive plant is proposed in a residential neighborhood, only 1600 feet from an elementary school and 600 feet from the nearest homes, and would bring a tractor-trailer truck down residential roads 840 times a week or about every four minutes. This is in a river valley with frequent air inversions that will trap hazardous air pollution at ground level like liquid filling up a bowl. Hampden and Hampshire Counties have some of the worst air pollution in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. In particular, the American Lung Association cites Hampden as having the worst 24-hour particle pollution levels in the state. Both also receive "F" ratings for ozone, and the proponents have stated in their EENF that this power plant will exceed federal New Source Review standards for NOx, an ozone precursor. A new large-scale source of stationary air pollution thus poses an unacceptable risk to children, families and the environment. While finding alternative sources for energy is extremely important, I believe that placing this particular plant at this site is being short sighted. The negative health effects of diesel and smoke stack emissions to humans is well documented. Communities all over the nation, that at first saw only the economic benefits of these enterprises are now dealing with the health consequences. (Commerce, California and CEPA) As a long time resident of the Hilltowns, I have seen and benefitted from the clean up and regulation of industry along the Westfield River. I find it remarkable that several miles upstream this very river has wild and scenic designation and protection, while here in Russell it is at grave risk of becoming mired in a cloud of dangerous gas. Likewise I am well aware that the Nature Conservancy and the EPA's of states bordering the Connecticut River are currently doing scientific and legal research on the varying water temperatures along the river and its impact on aquatic-life. This biomass plant will also change water temperatures on the Westfield River. Why would we want to cause damage to a thriving ecosystem? Lastly, I am extremely concerned that the materials burned in the plant will not be the virgin wood that has been proposed. It is well known that regulation and oversight of what is burned in the plant will be difficult at best, and that there are few safe guards for the residents of Russell, that in the future demolition debris and chemically treated pallets will not find their way into the incinerator and into our air. I implore you to find a way to stop this plant from being built and that we as a state be proactive in protecting our air, water, land and all of its inhabitants, rather than having to find ways to clean up economically motivated messes in the future; such as the Housatonic River in Pittsfield.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely, Dawne Piers-Gamble
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