

<https://www.eubioenergy.com/2022/09/12/our-recommendations-for-the-eu-parliaments-plenary-vote-on-the-renewable-energy-directive/> Episode 34

September 13, 2022 Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates (RAWSEP Residents) has an interest in having the European Union (EU) pass a bill that would end subsidies for biomass burning (wood burning) in the European Union. A vote on that subject will be held September 14, 2022. We agree with the organization Birdlife Europe and Central Asia on their recommendations to EU members on how EU members should vote. Birdlife Europe and Central Asia's focus is on helping wildlife. RAWSEP's focus is on protecting human health and life of near neighbors of residential wood burners, and preventing climate change at the same time. But we both agree on the need to stop wood burning, they agree on the need to stop industrial wood burning, and we concur and also are advocating for stopping residential wood burning. Both types of wood burning produce PM 2.5, a particulate of 2.5 micrometer size, the perfect size to infiltrate the human lung, producing a cascade of human health problems. Taking individual responsibility to stop residential wood burning is necessary. Government intervention, whether at the village, town, city, state or national level is also necessary. PurpleAir personal residential 2.5 monitors owned by near neighbors of residential wood burners, which are already used on U S AirNow Maps of smoke and Fire alongside \$100,000 standard EPA PM 2.5 monitors after correlating PurpleAir monitors with EPA monitors with a simple mathematical formula, could be used, after ordinances are written and passed, to fence-line monitor PM 2.5 entering yards of near neighbors of residential wood burners, providing regulation and enforcement that does not require entering residential wood burner's homes, nor require certification of wood burning appliances, which has been proven to ignore the health effects of the level of PM 2.5 that can be emitted by stoves "certified" by the industry that manufactures them. Monitoring PM 2.5 in near neighbors' yards can be cost effective and routine, and can be done 24 hours a day, and data can be downloaded the next day, during the workday of government officials. RAWSEP appreciates that Birdlife Europe and Central Asia does not classify bioenergy as a true renewable. RAWSEP appreciates that Birdlife Europe and Central Asia would like to stop subsidizing harmful practices. Birdlife Europe and Central Asia explained what their organization does. "We work at EU level with N G Os, activists and citizens to raise awareness of the dire impacts of bioenergy on nature and climate change, and we advocate to promote true renewables instead. The Renewable Energy Directive (R E D) is currently in revision at the European Parliament. This is a unique opportunity to stop the subsidies for burning forest biomass and crop-based biofuels for energy. We want to ensure that the new revision of the directive (R E D III) is up to the climate and environmental challenges, and stop subsidizing harmful practices." Birdlife Europe and Central Asia's recommendations for the EU Parliament's plenary vote on the Renewable Energy Directive: On September 14, Members of the European Parliament (M E P) will vote in plenary the new Renewable Energy Directive. Each M E P decision will determine the future of our forests: voting for more subsidies for bioenergy will increase the pressure on EU forests, already damaged by over-logging. About half of the wood used in the EU is burned for energy. Every year, the EU burns 20 times more wood for bioenergy than what burned in this summer's forest fires. It simply makes no sense to subsidize it. We believe our forests must remain standing to support vital biodiversity and keep CO2 sequestered to help EU climate goals. The annual €12 billion of subsidies for bioenergy should instead be invested in real renewables like solar, wind, and geothermal. The EU needs to protect and restore forests, for people, for biodiversity and for the climate – not log them for energy. MEPs, please vote to protect our future.

Our voting recommendations for forest biomass:

SUPPORT

1. Definition of primary woody biomass (worst type of wood to burn) : weakened by exemptions

Amendment 42

REJECT 'natural disasters' in split vote

Justification: this language could permit subsidies for logging a whole forest just because some trees are affected by a storm

2. Subsidies & targets

Amendments 44, 45, 47

(1) Stops subsidies for burning forest biomass (keep this)

(2) Sets a CAP on volume of forest biomass counting towards renewable energy targets – baseline: average 2017-2022.

REJECT "-2022" in split vote

Justification: wood use in 2022 will be abnormally high; and 2017 is the latest year with available data.

3. Phase down of counting volume of forest biomass to renewable targets.

Amendment 48

No immediate action until 2026 after Impact Assessment and review.

REJECT 'review' in split vote

Justification: the Commission has already assessed problems with forest biomass – no new review is needed.

4. No support for burning forest biomass in electricity only plants above 20 MW. Reinstates ENVI position

Amendment 50

Reinstates ENVI position

Justification: electricity only plants are extremely inefficient and do not justify subsidies. At the minimum the large ones should not receive support.

5. Primary woody biomass should not count towards renewable targets or be subsidised.

Amendment 75

Justification: this position reflects the science. It should be supported.

large ones should not receive support.

6. Cascading principle of use of wood

Split vote?

Vote to SUPPORT cascading principle included in RED. It is vital to keep this principle in EU law.

REJECT

1.

Amendment 25

Justification: Unacceptably further weakens definition of 'primary woody biomass' (PWB), thereby keeping biomass incentives intact for nearly all types of wood.

2. Stops existing plants having to meet GHG saving criteria – only some new ones from Jan 2021 will be affected

Amendment 46

Justification: many installations run for decades, it is vital to minimise their GHG emissions.

Our voting recommendations for biofuels:

SUPPORT

Amendment 1

This amendment includes the whole ITRE report that was adopted in July; we are supportive of the agreement overall and in particular the palm and soy (via high-ILUC revision) phase out; however, we are concerned about the status quo regarding the food and feed cap – by increasing the overall RES-T target in parallel it will drive the use of crop biofuels (among others) amidst the food security crisis we are facing; please see below more progressive options on the food and feed cap.

Amendment 23

It suggests a temporary suspension of food and feed biofuels in times of food security crisis like the one we are facing now.

Amendment 54

It retables the ENVI report on the food and feed cap and adds also the possibility of a temporary suspension of food and feed based biofuels in times of food crisis.

Amendment 55

It adds to the ITRE text on the phase out of palm and soy the phase-out of by-products as well.

REJECT

Amendments 17-19

They delete the sustainability criteria on raw materials for biofuels production from agricultural and/or forest biomass

Amendment 31

It introduces double counting for 6 years for the share of biofuels and biogas from grape marcs and wine lees.

Amendments 35 & 36

We recommend to reject these two amendments on Annex V and Annex VI that change the emission values in these annexes to less ambitious ones.

Amendment 37

It includes in part B of Annex IX different biomass fuel feedstocks used in stationary installations outside of transport sector.

Amendment 43

It proposes weaker text on the cascading principle than the ENVI and ITRE reports.\