



**STOP BURNING TREES**

## **Why do we need to end subsidies for burning wood in power stations? - Candidate Briefing**

- Drax, the UK's single largest carbon emitter and the world's biggest wood-burning company, burned almost [6m tonnes of wood](#) at its UK power plant in Yorkshire and emitted 11m tonnes of CO2 in 2023.
- Burning wood pellets emits more CO2 than burning coal; yet carbon accounting rules mean that these emissions are not officially counted in the UK.
- The government gives Drax around £700m per year in renewable energy subsidies from UK energy bills to burn wood. This results in huge carbon emissions whilst taking money away from genuine renewables.
- BBC Panorama found Drax has been sourcing wood from primary forests in British Columbia in Canada, and that Drax has [breached environmental laws 189 times](#) at its Canadian pellet mills.
- It takes 44-104 years to reabsorb carbon emitted from burning wood pellets. Scientists from around the world have warned that [burning wood increases global warming for decades to centuries](#).
- The UK Government recently [consulted](#) on extending bioenergy subsidies after 2027, potentially costing the public over £4 billion (if extended for only 3 years) or £12 billion if extended to 2035.
- If granted, the new subsidies could lock the UK into long-term funding for wood-burning power stations and leave little left in the green energy budget to fund genuine renewables like wind and solar power.
- Wood biomass production emits huge amounts of pollution, Drax has been accused of driving [environmental racism](#) in the Southern USA, where wood pellet mills are 50% [more likely to be sited in "environmental justice" communities](#) i.e. predominantly non-white, poor communities.
- **Biofuelwatch and Stop Burning Trees are calling for an end to subsidies for burning wood & for all candidates to say no to all subsidies for wood-burning in power stations like Drax.**

### **Why candidates should oppose new subsidies for wood-burning power stations**

**Burning biomass is not carbon neutral** - Burning wood in power stations like Drax in Yorkshire and Lynemouth in Northumberland releases significant carbon dioxide, which is not offset for decades until trees eventually regrow, if they ever do. [The Climate Change Committee \(CCC\) has found](#) that large-scale biomass generation is not compatible with the path to Net Zero and should not be used beyond the expiry of current subsidy support in 2027.

**Bioenergy is harming communities** - In the U.S. Southeast, where the majority of the UK's wood pellets are produced, communities are [being harmed](#) by the [significant air pollution emitted by these plants](#). On multiple occasions, Drax and its supplier Enviva have been fined for breaching legal air pollution limits at wood pellet plants.

**Bioenergy is one of the most expensive forms of energy** - The UK's reliance on bioenergy could undermine its energy security as it relies on wood imports which are likely to rise in price, and require huge areas of land. The government is considering extending bioenergy subsidies after 2027, potentially costing the public over £4 billion, or £12 billion if extended to 2035. This would leave little room for investing in genuine climate solutions like wind and solar power, which could create new jobs and help tackle the climate emergency and cost of living crisis.

**Bioenergy degrades forests and harms nature** - The UK biomass industry's sourcing of wood from forests is destroying [habitat for birds](#) and [other species](#) that are endangered and protected.

### **What can candidates do to help?**

- [Sign the Stop Burning Trees pledge to support an end to all subsidies for burning wood in power stations](#) and share it on social media.
- Please contact [biofuelwatch@gmail.com](mailto:biofuelwatch@gmail.com) for more information. [More detailed briefing here](#)