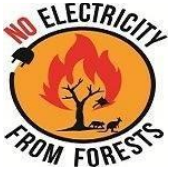


**Submission
No 175**

SUSTAINABILITY OF ENERGY SUPPLY AND RESOURCES IN NSW

Organisation: No Electricity from Forests

Date Received: 15 September 2019



The Environment and Planning Committee of the NSW Parliament
Parliament House
Sydney, 2000
15th September 2019

Frank Dennis
No Electricity from Forests



SUBMISSION TO INQUIRY INTO THE SUSTAINABILITY OF ENERGY SUPPLY AND RESOURCES IN NSW

Dear Committee

I am writing as a member of No Electricity from Forests, a group recently formed here on the Mid North Coast of NSW. We have been campaigning locally calling for a halt to logging of native forests for the purposes of burning wood to produce electricity.

Recent Climate of the Nation survey (Australia Institute) show there is considerable public support for stronger action by government at all levels on environmental issues, and a particularly high concern about climate change, the exponential rise of Greenhouse gas emissions, average world temperature, plant and animal extinctions and the lack of action from government to curb emissions.

The current situation is being called a **climate emergency** by an increasing number of people and organisations concerned with the lack of coherent, scientifically based, climate, forest and land clearing policies.

We hope this time you really do listen to the experts and the science behind the ever evident crisis that is unfolding which is already producing catastrophic effects. There is increasing evidence that we could trigger runaway global heating, and some very worrying recent evidence that this may be already happening. It is time you listened to your constituents on these issues.

One stance that has alarmed many people is the active promotion of the burning of wood from native forests to be used in electricity generation, completely at odds with concerns about rising harmful levels of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases and the need to urgently transition to real renewable energy sources such as wind, solar and pumped storage.

Of concern to our group is the promotion of bioenergy, particularly the burning of wood from forests to produce electricity and other carbon energy byproducts such as diesel fuel. This will have serious detrimental effects on our future climate outcomes and on our capacity to maintain biodiversity.

In June of this year the IPCC reiterated an emphatic decree. To have any chance of keeping global warming to 1.5 degrees temperature rise as set out in the Paris Accord targets (and below 2 degrees Celsius), the world must rapidly decarbonise its energy supply and simultaneously reverse the trend of accelerating deforestation and degradation.

If biofuels are promoted this will have an overall opposite effect. Here in Australia large areas of forests will be decimated to meet the wood supply demand for this so called "new" industry. The NSW North Coast forests are no exception and will certainly face an unprecedented 180-fold level increase in logging intensity and related massive increases in wood volumes to be supplied under these agreements.

The forest industry misleadingly claims that only 'residues' or 'wastes' will be used in the production of wood pellets for burning in power stations. **To supply the volumes required, whole logs of smaller diameter, 'pulp logs', will be logged** Ref: <https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/forestry/north-coast-residues-project>

For instance, under the new approved Coastal Integrated Forests Operational Approval (IFOA) in NSW, 140,000 ha of State Forest between Taree and Grafton has been opened for 'intensive harvesting' (i.e. clear-felling). This zone will be clear-felled in areas of 45- 60 ha to create Blackbutt monocultures.

The recent changes to the regional Forest Agreements (RFAs) and IFOA will allow the logging of non-saw logs and is set to double from 320,000 to 660,000 tonnes. The affected zones include critical Koala habitat proposed for inclusion in The Great Koala National Park. The use of biomass from native hardwoods will most certainly have serious consequences for many threatened species including the Koala. Any support for this use will certainly contribute to their likely extinction in less than 30 years.

Many of the submissions to the recent RFA/IFOA reviews agreed with other governmental experts who also gave advice, that it is not possible to meet both the wood supply and to meet the requirements of Environmentally Sustainable Management practices (ESMP). Most submissions thought the whole RFA process should be scrapped.

Despite forest industry and Forestry Corporation assertions, wood is not the renewable energy source it is claimed to be. This is a dishonest claim. The production and consumption of biofuels and the burning of biomass releases carbon dioxide. Per unit of energy produced, the quantities of CO₂ added to the atmosphere is greater than that produced by using fossil fuels.

This is especially the case for the rapidly expanding wood fired power stations overseas where the CO₂ released is somewhere between 10 and 80% higher than burning coal per unit of electricity produced.

ref: <http://www.ase.tufts.edu/gdae/Pubs/climate/ClimatePolicyBrief7.pdf>

Bioenergy from wood is not carbon neutral and is certainly **not** the solution for decarbonising the economy. Hundreds of European scientists wrote to the EU with the scientific explanation but were ignored.

Ref: <https://www.euractiv.com/section/energy/opinion/need-for-a-scientific-basis-of-eu-climate-policy-on-forests/>

The USA and Australia have followed suit. As a result, the world is facing a massive increase in the degradation of native forests to supply the demand for wood pellets and it is not sustainable: an industry heavily subsidised by taxpayers based on the renewable or carbon-neutral fallacy.

Ref: https://www.southernenvironment.org/uploads/publications/Biomass_Factsheet_0719_F_Pgs.pdf

Ref: <https://www.southernenvironment.org/news-and-press/news-feed/new-study-shows-burning-wood-from-sustainably-managed-forests-increases-carbon-pollution-for-40-years>

There are several questions we would like you to consider:

- Are you willing to consider the fact that the present carbon accounting mechanism are flawed and not supported by the science? (Using wood - based fuels, rather than assisting us in the rapid transition to the decarbonized energy system urgently needed to bring down atmospheric carbon levels to something below 350 parts per million, will hinder us in reaching these goals.)

https://plattform-wald-klima.de/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Misguided_strategy_burning_wood.pdf

New Report Shows Wood Pellets from Drax's U.S. Mills Increase Carbon Emissions During the Timeframe Necessary to Address Climate Change

https://www.southernenvironment.org/Biomass_Factsheet_0719_F_Pgs

- What is your view of the huge demand for pelletised wood overseas to burn for electricity generation and the recent trade representations to Japan to discuss supply of wood biomass for this purpose and the small but growing call to expand its use here in Australia? (Japan is reputed to now have the biggest wood fueled power stations in the world)
<https://www.timberbiz.com.au/australia-japan-forest-products-trade-strengthened/>
- Do you understand fully what the impact of promoting new bioenergy markets for wood will be on forest biodiversity and other important contingent environmental values?
- Do you understand the effect this will have on climate and our capacity to mitigate against runaway global heating?

We would ask you:

To support changing the classification of wood as “renewable” energy source to “non- renewable”.

To call for a wide-ranging enquiry into the current logging laws at both Commonwealth and State level and the proposed increased future use of low- quality forest wood and so-called forest residues as biomass fuel source.

We ask you to seek a thorough audit of wood supply availability and the attendant wood supply agreements.

To champion all forms of genuine renewable energy sources such as solar and wind to contribute to the urgent action to achieve the necessary rapid transition to zero emissions.

We would be happy to provide you with further information. We would also be happy to organize an inspection of our local forests if you are interested.

Submitted by

Frank Dennis

No Electricity from Forests

(Tel [REDACTED])