

This is the fourth edition of our monthly newsletter, with details of recent and upcoming events and news from campaigns throughout the UK. We will not be publishing a newsletter in July, but will be back again in August with more bioenergy news. In the meantime, please let us know if you would like more information about particular campaign issues/news. And if you are looking for news about biomass campaigning in the US, then please see www.energyjustice.net/biomass/monitor

Also, we would like to apologise to anyone who may have received a spam/viral message through a Biofuelwatch email account (not through our listserve!) One of our email accounts appears to have been hacked, but you will be pleased to hear that it is now secure.

In this Mailout:

- 1) A New Campaign is Launched: Battersea Against Biofuels**
- 2) Coal-to-Biomass Conversions Campaign Update**
- 3) Updates on Local Biomass and Biofuel Power Station Campaigns and on Scottish Bioenergy Policy**

1) Battersea Against Biofuels

Battersea Against Biofuels is a local London-based group which has recently formed to prevent Sime Darby (the world's largest palm oil producer and co-owner of Battersea Power Station) from installing a palm oil fired CHP plant on their site. Two campaigning meetings have so far been held, with a **Public Meeting planned for Wednesday the 10th of July**. Speakers will include Helen Buckland of Sumatran Orangutan Society and Kenneth Richter, FOE biofuel campaigner. More details of the public meeting will be announced on the Battersea Against Biofuels facebook page closer to the time.

Battersea Against Biofuels have engaged with many groups locally and received support from the Battersea and Wandsworth Trades Council. They are also working to educate the planning authority and to convince developers that what they are planning will face significant opposition for wider environmental reasons, but also particularly in light of the local impacts of pollution expected from the plant.

If you would like to get involved or find out more about this campaign then please email us at biofuelwatch@ymail.com and like our Facebook page here: <https://www.facebook.com/BatterseaAgainstBiofuels>

A link to our briefing paper and our publicity materials are also available from the Facebook page. We are currently having campaign meetings every two weeks, which anyone is welcome to attend. The next will take place on Thursday the 27th of June at 7.30pm at the Victoria pub, Queenstown Road, SW8 3QH.

2) Coal-to-Biomass Conversions Campaign Update

As mentioned in our May newsletter, Biofuelwatch recently obtained data through a Freedom of Information request to the Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC) which highlights how Drax Plc has been misleading MPs and the public over biomass sustainability claims. The documentation received from DECC showed that Drax requires wood from whole trees and not forestry residues or energy crops to run its power station, and that the current supply of this is insufficient for the UK's expected demand. It also showed that, following discussions between DECC and Drax, the company started fundraising for its conversion to biomass three months before new subsidy rules crucial to Drax's plans were approved by Parliament. During a recent biomass debate by the Energy and Climate Change Committee, MPs raised several of the concerns arising from the evidence which Biofuelwatch had obtained and publicised.

Drax have quite clearly been telling DECC one thing and the public another. The fact of the matter is that Drax will be burning huge volumes of pellets made from whole trees mostly from the felling of highly biodiverse forests in North America, and not residues (most of which are too high in bark content for Drax's boilers), short-rotation trees or crops or straw (none of which are technically

suitable for coal-to-biomass conversions.)

In response to these findings, Biofuelwatch issued a press release, which you can view here: <http://www.biofuelwatch.org.uk/2013/drax-lobbying-pr/>

An article by Biofuelwatch on the subject was also published in Red Pepper entitled "Biomass: The Trojan Horse of Renewables" which can be read here <http://www.redpepper.org.uk/biomass-the-trojan-horse-of-renewables/>

In addition to this, an article focusing on where this huge amount of biomass is going to come from to meet increasing UK demand can be read here: <http://peopleforestsrightrights.wordpress.com/2013/05/24/of-biomass-energy-crops-power-stations-and-deforestation/>

You may have seen some of the attacks by the Renewable Energy Association (REA), tier Back Biomass campaign (strongly supported by Drax) and others, on the RSPB, Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth over their report "*Dirtier than Coal*" (http://www.rspb.org.uk/Images/biomass_report_tcm9-326672.pdf), and on Professor Timothy Searchinger whose scientific findings were cited in that report. The REA's key argument against these NGOs was that "*the paper chooses one scenario, amongst the hundreds examined, that is explicitly rejected by the DECC study*". Now we know for certain, through our Freedom of Information request, that the scenario discussed in that NGO report (wood from whole trees) is the one that applies to **all** coal-to-biomass conversions (and likely to many future dedicated biomass power stations, too) and thus to most UK biomass capacity!

We just found out that yet another coal-to-biomass conversion has received planning permission. Rugeley Power Station in Staffordshire now has permission to convert to as much as 100% wood, for which they would need to burn pellets made from 7.5 million green tonnes of wood every year. Rugeley Power Station is owned by GDF Suez and Mitsui & Co. So far, **three of the now six approved conversions are under way** (Drax, Tilbury Band Ironbridge). Dubiously, all of those conversions have been approved as minor alterations to planning permits by local authorities. **Rugeley Power Station now brings the projected future UK demand for wood for electricity to around 89 million tonnes a year – almost 9 times as much as the UK's total annual wood production.** We have updated our [coal-to-biomass conversions briefing](#) to reflect these developments.

3. Update on local biomass and biofuel power station campaigns and on Scottish Bioenergy Policy

Following on from the Secretary of State's decision to approve Peel Energy's biomass power station in **Trafford** (reported in our May newsletter) Trafford Council has now lodged an application for a Judicial Review to challenge that decision. This is very welcome news and it is heartening to see a local authority prepared to defend the public health and interests of local communities against Peel Energy and Eric Pickles in this way. We sincerely hope the Judicial Review will be successful. For more information, please see www.breathethecleanairgroup.co.uk

In **Scotland**, Grangemouth residents and campaign groups are outraged by a decision to approve a Forth Energy biomass power station. On the 3rd of June, Energy Minister Fergus Ewing announced that consent has been granted for a huge 120MWe biomass power station in Grangemouth. All members of Grangemouth Community Council have resigned following this decision. Local residents including the Grangemouth Community Council, two other nearby Community Councils as well as campaigning groups Biofuelwatch, two local Friends of the Earth groups and the River Carron Fisheries Management Group had presented detailed evidence against the plans at a Public Local Inquiry held last May.

Walter Inglis, Grangemouth resident and (until his recent resignation) Chairperson of Grangemouth community Council, said in a joint press release: "*This is a bad day for the people of Grangemouth who have worsening air quality to look forward to, but it's also a bad day for the people of Scotland because of the wider issues that affect us all. The First Minister has made commitments to climate justice that are now entirely contradicted by the decision from the Energy Minister today.*" (<http://www.biofuelwatch.org.uk/2013/grangemouth-residents-and-campaign-groups-outraged-by->

[decision-to-approve-forth-energy-biomass-plant/\)](#)

The power station will require 1.5 million tonnes of imported wood a year, which according to developers could come from whole trees in the southern US or from highly destructive eucalyptus plantations in Brazil. Contrary to claims that the plant will burn low-carbon, renewable fuel, it will be responsible for vast carbon dioxide emissions. The plant will also cause worsened air quality in Grangemouth, an area with already unacceptable levels of air pollution, as well as a range of other unacceptable impacts.

The decision contradicts the Scottish Government's public position on bioenergy, which states that biomass should be used on a small-scale, decentralised and with high efficiency rates. Ostensibly, the Scottish Government decision to withdraw subsidies from biomass power stations above 15 MW that are not accredited as CHP was introduced to achieve this aim. However, Biofuelwatch, Friends of the Earth Scotland and local campaign groups had strongly opposed this policy as being full of loopholes. Across the UK, CHP accreditation can be obtained for biomass power stations of any size that achieve just 35% or less overall efficiency and that make use of no more than a tiny fraction of the heat, possibly just for drying their own woodchips. Now, our fears that such a meaningless definition of CHP would be used as a means for allowing large-scale destructive biomass power stations in Scotland, have been realised.