



## From the Editor

By Rachel Smolker, Managing Editor

Occupy Wall Street has arrived. While there are some criticizing the "lack of clear messaging," others would agree that the overarching theme—resisting corporations sucking the lifeblood out of the 99 percent—is a powerful and uniting theme.

For those resisting biomass, there is certainly a strong resonance. Big Timber, Big Ag and a list from A to Z of profiteers are cashing in on subsidies that we the 99 percent pay for...and they use our money to build polluting facilities that will make our kids and ourselves sick, drive up our healthcare costs, and trash our forests and fields.

Time to get offline and head to the streets!

**THE BIOMASS MONITOR** is published by the Biomass Accountability Project, Biofuelwatch, Energy Justice Network, Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives, and Save America's Forests.

**Managing Editor - Rachel Smolker**

**Managing Editor - Meg Sheehan**

**Editor & Journalist - Josh Schlossberg**

For submissions, feedback, to sign up for e-newsletter or to become a distributor, contact us at [thebiomassmonitor@gmail.com](mailto:thebiomassmonitor@gmail.com) or on Facebook.

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 State Lines
- 2 Source Watch/Buster of the Month
- 3 Our Health/State Lines (cont.)
- 4 State Lines (cont.)
- 4 Eye on D.C. / Take Action!
- 4 Alternatives

## State Lines

### Eugene, Oregon Biomass Power Fails Pollution Test

-By Josh Schlossberg

(source: Camilla Mortensen, *Eugene Weekly*, Sept. 29, 2011)

*Seneca Sawmill's* 20-megawatt biomass power incinerator in Eugene, Oregon failed a portion of its air pollution control test resulting in a \$9,856 fine from *Lane Regional Air Protection Agency (LRAPA)*.

The incinerator emitted unlawful quantities of particulate matter, which *LRAPA* documents explain as an unintended result of pollution control measures meant to reduce nitrogen oxides. The neighborhood surrounding the incinerator has a greater proportion of low income, disabled, and Latino residents than other Eugene neighborhoods.



"Biomess" by Trask Bedortha

(Photo: Eugene Weekly, July 22, 2010)

Particulate matter consists of "fine particles which are easily inhaled deeply into the lungs where they can be absorbed into the bloodstream or remain embedded for long periods of time," according to the *American Lung Association*.

*Seneca Sawmill* sources its wood by clearcutting its industrial timberlands and from National Forests, including old growth forests.

# Source Watch

## Study: Thinning Forests for Biomass Bad for Climate

-By Josh Schlossberg

**May 25, 2011:** A new study from *Oregon State University* concludes that “thinning” forests increases carbon dioxide emissions over a fifty year period when compared to unlogged forests. Western forests, particularly public lands, are experiencing an increasing number of “fuel reduction” logging projects to provide lumber and biomass energy under the banner of “wildfire prevention.”

The study, “Impacts of Thinning on Carbon Stores in the Pacific Northwest,” contradicts timber and biomass industry claims of “carbon neutrality” for cutting trees for biomass power.

The study found that “forest carbon pools always

immediately decreased as a result of a fuel reduction thinning, with larger differences in total carbon pools resulting from heavier thinning treatments.”

*U.S. Forest Service* scientists demonstrate maintaining a defensible space immediately around homes—not logging backcountry forests—to be the most effective fire prevention.



*Oregon rainforest facing “fuel reduction” logging*

### **BIOMASS BUSTER of the Month** *Chris Matera - Massachusetts*



**Chris Matera** is the founder and director of *Massachusetts Forest Watch* (maforests.org), a grassroots group advocating for the protection of New England’s forests and against biomass incineration. Chris has been instrumental in raising awareness around New England to the folly of burning our precious forests for polluting energy, while applying strong political pressure.

“We do not need the additional pollution and tiny amounts of energy available from cutting, burning and belching forests up smokestacks,” Chris explains. “But we do need to protect forests if they are to continue cleaning up the mess we humans have already made of our air, water and atmosphere.”

### **USDA’s \$80 Million Biofuel Handout**

-By Josh Schlossberg

**Sept. 28, 2011:** *The U.S. Department of Agriculture* issued two \$40 million grants to the *University of Washington* and *Washington State University* for the development of hybrid poplar bio-energy crops for use as liquid transportation fuels.

*GreenWood Resources*, headquartered in Portland, Oregon, will “oversee the development of multiple first-stage hybrid poplar bio-energy tree farms at strategic locations throughout the Pacific Northwest,” according to a press release.

The grant will help “advance the science that will lead to the development of a new class of bio-energy hybrid poplar varieties producing significant yields of woody biomass” to convert to liquid fuels, said Brian Stanton, *GreenWood’s* chief science officer. 🔍

# Our Health

## Air Pollution Can Impact Brain

(source: *ScienceDaily*, July 6, 2011)

-By Josh Schlossberg

A study out of *Ohio State University* demonstrated that exposure to particulate matter, a byproduct of biomass burning and other combustion, resulted in learning and memory problems and depression in mice.

"The results suggest prolonged exposure to polluted air can have visible, negative effects on the brain, which can lead to a variety of health problems," said lead author Laura Fonken, doctoral student of neuroscience at *Ohio State*.



The study, published in *Molecular Psychiatry*, adds brain impacts to the litany of health concerns from particulate matter to those of lung disease, high blood pressure, obesity, and diabetes.

"The more we learn about the health effects of prolonged exposure to air pollution, the more reasons there are to be concerned," said study co-author Randy Nelson, professor of neuroscience and psychology at *Ohio State*.

"This could have important and troubling implications for people who live and work in polluted urban areas around the world," warned Fonken.

Biomass power incinerators emit higher levels of particulate matter than coal burning plants. 🔍

# State Lines (continued)

## Port St. Joe, FL Citizens Protest Biomass

-By Josh Schlossberg

**Oct. 4, 2011:** Dozens of concerned Florida citizens gathered in front of the Port St. Joe City Hall to ask City Commissioners deny approval for a 55-megawatt biomass power incinerator. Despite opposition from dozens of organizations including the *American Lung Association*, *Physicians for Social Responsibility*, and the *National Association for the Advancement of Colored People*, the Commissioners unanimously approved the project, known as the *Northwest Florida Renewable Energy Center*.



*Florida residents opposing biomass power*  
(Photo: [www.gulfbiomassincinerator.org](http://www.gulfbiomassincinerator.org))

Objections to the project include concerns with toxic air pollution, use of up to 13 million gallons of drinking water per day, pollution dumped in St. Joseph's Bay, and 160 daily diesel truck trips, according to a press release.

"It's wrong to put profit before people," said protest organizer **Erica Bruckner**. "We should not be forced to accept a toxic incinerator that is going to harm our health for decades, ruin our tourist economy, drive down the value of our homes and businesses, and destroy our natural resources."

## State Lines (continued)

### Incinerator Opponent Predicts Harrisburg, PA Bankruptcy

(source: Chris Papst, WHPTV, October 3, 2011)

The imminent bankruptcy of Pennsylvania's capital was predicted by **Mike Ewall**, director of *Energy Justice Network*, eight years prior. In 2003, Ewall told the *Harrisburg City Council* that providing a \$125 million loan to fix a polluting municipal waste incinerator would bankrupt the city. Ignoring overwhelming public opposition, the council voted 6-1 in favor of the loan.

"Because the city and the authority don't have guaranteed waste streams, over-estimate the potential power and steam sales, under-estimate ash disposal and operating costs, and have no guarantee of an air pollution permit, this project will put the city into bankruptcy," warned Ewall.

"Everything that our opponents have said have been lies, distortions and untruths and things they have made up," said Randy King, spokesperson for Harrisburg's former Mayor Reed in 2003.

The Harrisburg incinerator was the longest operating incinerator in the nation. 🔍

## Eye on D.C.

### Do the 1% Own Congress?

-By Rachel Smolker

Washington D.C. has gone septic. A host of new bill proposals will provide more supports for biomass, but at the same time a small opportunity exists—with the "super committee" charged with carving out the budget. Could they be convinced that biomass subsidies are a "waste?"

And in the larger context it is downright scary to see attempts to entirely disembowel the EPA, using the argument that protecting the environment is a "jobs killer."

## Alternatives

### Small Wind Reaches 100 Megawatts

*AWEA Small Wind Turbine Global Market Study*

<http://e360.yale.edu>



(Photo: Turbine-turbines.com)

Despite an economic downturn, the U.S. market for small wind turbines—those with rated capacities of 100 kilowatts (kW) and less—grew 15% in 2009 with 20.3 Megawatts (MW) of new capacity and \$82.4 million in sales. This growth equates to nearly 10,000 new units and pushes the total installed capacity in the U.S. to 100 MW.

Half of this 100-MW milestone capacity came within the past three years of the industry's 80-year history. Overall, the industry appears to be heading for sustained growth; the question is at what rate. If trends in investment and policy support continue, the U.S. may very well reach the industry's projection of installing more than 1 GW of cumulative capacity by 2015. 🔍

Any and all attempts to regulate CO2 are floundering and a series of bills in process now would indefinitely delay regulation of toxic pollution from power plants, cement kilns, and industrial boilers: a heyday for the incinerator developers and "Mayday" for our children's lungs.

## TAKE ACTION!

*Contact members of the Congressional "Super Committee" and let them know that the best way to balance the budget and relieve taxpayers of their financial burden is to cut any and all subsidies to biomass power incineration.*

*Go to: <http://www.ncpssm.org/supercommittee>*