

Press release by Friends of the Earth Ealing, Biofuelwatch and Food not Fuel (London)

For immediate release

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London Borough of Ealing Council praised for putting residents, climate and environment before biofuel power plans

Environmental campaigners and local residents are praising tonight's unanimous decision by Ealing Council's planning committee to reject a planning application for a biofuel power station. Over 1,600 individuals, the vast majority of them local residents had objected to the plans, as did several environmental and community organisations including places of worship. The power station, proposed by Blue NG¹, would have burned virgin vegetable oil which would have required 6700 hectares² of UK cropland had the company used only UK rapeseed oil. Blue NG had spoken of UK biofuels as their choice but had not ruled out using palm oil. Apart from the impacts which biofuel production has on climate, communities and the environment, residents and groups had also been concerned about increased emissions in Southall, an area where air pollution already exceeds EU regulations and where life expectancy is ten years lower than in other parts of the borough.

Nic Ferriday from Friends of the Earth Ealing said: "Ealing Councillors have made the right decision for Southall and for communities, rainforests and the climate. All of these would have suffered directly or indirectly as a result of such a new demand for biofuels. Blue NG should listen to the decision and drop all other plans for burning biofuels."

Deepak Rughani from Biofuelwatch states: "Unlike the UK government, Councillors in Ealing have seen through the pretence that biofuels are 'sustainable'. One study and report after another shows that our demand for biofuels is already unsustainable and causes more deforestation, more hunger, more communities losing their land and more climate change. We need true renewable energy, not biofuels."

Aneaka Kellay, a local resident from Food not Fuel adds: "Many local residents and community groups will be pleased with the decision and also relieved that their area will not now suffer more pollution and more threats to local peoples' health. This should send a signal to other local authorities faced with similar applications. The decision will now be referred to the London Mayor who has the power to agree or override the decision in the next two weeks. Now we'll see if democracy carries!"

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Notes:

1) Blue NG is a subsidiary of the National Grid and of 2OC. They obtained permission to build one biofuel power station in Beckton, Newham, East London last year, however construction has not yet started.

2) 6700 Hectares used for mixed farming would feed 25,000 people