

## Some common responses from MPs and how to reply



1. MP: "I can't / don't sign Early Day Motions so I can't support the campaign even though I agree with it."
  - If your MP cannot or prefers not to sign the [Early Day Motion](#), there are still lots of things they can do to support the campaign.
  - You can ask them to sign the [Open Letter](#), ask a Parliamentary Question or write directly to the [Secretary of State](#) and the [Minister for Energy and Clean Growth](#).
2. MP: "Biomass is green, renewable energy."
  - The biomass industry claims that burning wood is renewable energy because they argue that new trees will absorb the greenhouse gas emissions produced.
  - However, it will take decades or even longer for new plants to absorb the emissions. This is time which we do not have if we are to keep global temperature rises to 1.5 degrees.
  - The best way to reduce emissions is to protect & restore forests, not burn them.
3. MP: "Burning wood is less harmful for the climate than burning fossil fuels and helps reduce our emissions."
  - Clear-felling forests and burning the wood in biomass power stations is [making climate change worse and does not 'decarbonise' or 'reduce emissions'](#).
  - It is as bad for the climate as coal and not a good alternative to fossil fuels.
  - The best ways to reduce climate change and meet our energy needs are to preserve forests and invest in genuinely renewable wind, wave and solar power.



4. MP: "Biomass power plants are just burning waste wood."
  - The biomass industry's definition of "[waste wood](#)" might not be what you expect.
  - It includes whole trees in [categories like "low grade wood fibre"](#).
  - American environmental organisations have proved that a significant proportion of the wood burned in UK biomass power stations comes from [the clear-felling of wetland forests in the Southern US](#).
  - These forests are home to many endangered species, including black bears, salamanders, the Venus flytrap and a large number of bird species.
  - Drax Power Station in Yorkshire is the [world's largest biomass burner](#) and received [£789 m in renewable subsidies in 2018](#) to burn wood from these biodiverse forests. That is almost £2 m every day.
  - In addition to the [4.5 million tonnes of wood from the southern USA](#) which Drax burned in 2018, it also burned 1.2 million tonnes of wood from Canada and 1 million tonnes from the Baltic States, as well as smaller quantities from Portugal, Brazil, Belarus, the UK and 'other European countries'.
  
5. MP: "There are strong sustainability standards to protect the forests"
  - Unfortunately, the [biomass Sustainability Standards are very weak](#) and there is no independent body to enforce them.
  - They also enshrine in Law the lie that biomass energy is carbon neutral.
  - This has allowed Drax Power Station to claim its biomass burning is 86% better than coal and to receive £789m of bill payers' money in 2018.
  - Drax's biomass burning emits more CO2 than coal per unit of energy generated.
  - A further concern is that communities local to biomass pellet plants and export facilities suffer from environmental injustice as they are exposed to noise and air pollution from wood dust and heavy traffic.
  - These pellet mills are often located in lower income communities and communities of colour who are already adversely affected by other industrial pollution and social inequality. For more information, please see [here](#).

6. MP: “The subsidies can’t be changed. It would need a change in the Law.”
  - **The subsidies can be diverted from biomass to renewables through secondary legislation. The Secretary of State for Business Energy & Industrial Strategy has the power to do this and no Act of Parliament is necessary.**
  - **The government has already made a very positive first step by [effectively ruling out subsidies for burning imported wood in future power stations](#).**
  - **We now need it to end subsidies for existing biomass power stations and redirect them to low-carbon and renewable wind, wave and solar power.**
7. MP: “If we cancel subsidies for biomass, that doesn’t mean it will help wind, wave and solar power. The biomass plants may just be converted back to burn coal.”
  - **The good news is that renewable subsidies are part of a large pot of money called The Levy Control Framework.**
  - **If the subsidies are removed from biomass energy, around £800m will automatically become available for genuinely renewable wind, wave and solar power.**
  - **Diverting subsidies from biomass to renewable energy will reduce greenhouse gas emissions, lower air pollution, protect forests & create new green jobs.**

### Useful resources



- [End biomass subsidies campaign](#)
- [#AxeDrax Campaign information](#)
- [MP Briefing](#)
- [Early Day Motion 1771: Subsidies for Biomass Energy Generation](#)
- [Open Letter for MPs](#)

Drax Power Station by Shirokazan