

**Rt Hon Ed Miliband MP**, Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero  
**Rt Hon David Lammy MP**, Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs  
**Steve Reed OBE MP**, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

15 October 2024

Dear Secretaries of State,

We are writing to you to urgently express our opposition to any extension of subsidies for large-scale biomass power stations. Your Government has inherited a consultation on the question of extending these subsidies - which will further harm global biodiversity, undermine energy security, and cost energy bill payers hundreds of millions of pounds every year.

Many of our organisations wrote to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero on this matter several weeks ago, including requesting a meeting. We would once again extend a request to meet with you regarding this issue.

You have outlined the [UK's renewed commitment](#) to addressing the nature and climate crisis on the world stage. UK bioenergy companies are harming global biodiversity, including old-growth and ancient forests in Europe, the United States, and Canada. Year after year, [investigations](#) show that the bioenergy industry is logging whole trees, destroying important wildlife habitats and protected areas like the United States' North Atlantic Coastal Plain Biodiversity Hotspot, Canada's boreal forest, and Europe's Natura 2000 and other nature-rich forests.

Meanwhile, burning forests in power stations makes climate change worse. It emits [huge volumes of greenhouse gases](#) and forests take decades to recover the [capacity to absorb carbon](#) – timescales that far exceed critical climate tipping points. Nevertheless, these mega-emitters receive billions in low-carbon subsidies.

The UK government is only considering subsidy extensions to give biomass companies more time to develop carbon capture and storage technology (CCS). But that technology may never work, and even if it does, it will take decades to scale up and be prohibitively expensive - up to [£43 billion](#) in subsidies over 25 years for a single Bioenergy with CCS power plant (BECCS). It will fail to deliver the promised negative emissions.

Biomass undermines the Government's central pledges to lower bills and increase energy independence. Using bioenergy increases the UK's dependence on fuel imports. Further, it [raises energy bills](#) because it is one of the most expensive energy technologies in the world.

Finally, UK bioenergy [harms environmental justice](#) communities in the U.S. Southeast, where wood pellet mills emit scores of dangerous air pollutants that are known to cause asthma, cancer, and other health hazards. While the U.S. government has [repeatedly fined bioenergy companies](#) – including Drax – for violating U.S. air pollution limits, the industry continues to operate as business as usual.

Instead of these subsidies locking in an energy system reliant on biomass electricity generation at high load factors, a point which has been underlined by the [Climate Change Committee](#), we urge the Government to achieve net zero goals by focusing on genuine renewables like wind and solar; energy efficiency measures like subsidies for heat pumps and home insulation, and nature restoration.

We respectfully request that the UK government not extend bioenergy subsidies past 2027. To do so would be disastrous for nature, the climate, energy security and costs, and communities.

Yours sincerely,

Matt Williams, Senior Advocate, NRDC (Natural Resources Defense Council)

Katie-Jo Luxton, Executive Director, Global Conservation, RSPB

Angela Francis, Director of Policy, WWF UK

Doug Parr, Policy Director, Greenpeace UK

Jamie Peters, Interim CEO, Friends of the Earth EWNl

Mary Booth PhD, Director, Partnership for Policy Integrity

Adam Eagle, CEO, The Lifescape Project

Pete Deane, Director, Biofuelwatch

Claire James, Campaigns Coordinator, Campaign against Climate Change

Jemima Hartshorn, Founder and Director, Mums for Lungs

Tom Wilson, Director, UK Youth Climate Coalition

Carina Millstone, Executive Director, Feedback Global

Merry Dickinson, Lead Campaigner, Stop Burning Trees Coalition

Glen Tarman, Director of Policy and Advocacy, Sustain

Rochana Sheward, Director, Friends of the Earth Scotland