

Governor Tate Reeves and Agency Directors on MDEQ Permit Board

Jackson, MS

Dear Governor Reeves:

Dear Agency Directors:

We are writing to you on behalf of 85 organisations from around the world, including those representing communities living locally to Drax sites and communities who are involuntarily subsidising Drax, to advocate for the health of Gloster, Mississippi residents. Many of these residents have suffered for a decade from air pollution from the UK-headquartered Drax Amite BioEnergy wood pellet manufacturing plant.

We are closely following the proceedings surrounding Drax's operations in Gloster. On October 14th at 9:00 a.m. the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality Permit Board will convene to hold an evidentiary hearing on Draft Air Construction Permit No. 0080-00031 and Draft Title V Permit 0080-00050 for Drax's Amite BioEnergy, LLC Wood Pellet Plant.

We stand in solidarity with the Gloster residents who have worked tirelessly to document the serious health impacts they face, including widespread respiratory illnesses. These concerns were formally submitted to the Permit Board during the required public meeting in November 2024 and again at the Board's April 8th, 2025 meeting, where Drax's application for its permit to be reclassified from a minor to a major source of Hazardous Air Pollutants was denied.

Surveys conducted in collaboration with university-based public health professionals were submitted to the record in April, providing further evidence of the community health impacts. These surveys, alongside additional health data from Gloster residents and other reports will be entered into the administrative record at the October 14th hearing.

As organisations based around the world, including in the UK where Drax is headquartered, we urge regulators to listen to the mounting evidence of harm and ensure that the company's overseas operations meet the highest environmental and public health standards.

We are gravely concerned about the human cost of Drax's wood pellet operations in Gloster. From young children with asthma who are unable to play outside, to elderly residents reliant on costly breathing treatments, it is clear that Gloster is a community in crisis. The devastating toll of respiratory illness has been well documented, including through the powerful personal testimonies shared by residents at the MDEQ's public meeting on November 14th, 2024. Those who can afford to leave are doing so, while those who remain are left to suffer worsening health. Gloster has faced a growing air quality crisis for over a decade. Drax's operations in Gloster adversely pollute a predominantly Black community.

Drax, a UK-headquartered company, produces wood pellets for export abroad including the UK, Europe and Asia. This global supply chain is causing serious harm to frontline communities like Gloster. Residents are suffering from the dust and are forced to breathe hazardous air pollution, including volatile organic compounds such as formaldehyde,

acrolein, and methanol. Unlike other Mississippi towns, such as Lucedale, who have sited wood pellet mills in industrial zones away from residential areas, Gloster's community lives directly beside the Drax facility, including even along its fence line.

We call for the strictest possible air pollution controls to protect the health and wellbeing of Gloster residents and to ensure UK companies are held accountable for the environmental and public health impacts of their operations abroad.

We call on Mississippi's leadership to prioritise the health and wellbeing of Gloster residents over the interests of a UK-headquartered company which is currently being investigated by the UK Financial Conduct Authority over concerns about its sourcing of wood. We urge MDEQ to reject Drax's draft permit, which would allow an increase in harmful air emissions from its Amite BioEnergy facility, and instead to support the community's call for full accountability and transparency in this process.

We join Gloster residents in requesting that the appointed agency director members of the MDEQ Permit Board from five executive branch agencies attend the upcoming hearing, hear the testimony of community members and that these director members vote. Specifically, we urge you to support the request that Joe Spraggins, Jess New, Lynn Posey, Dr. Daniel Edney, and Commissioner Gipson attend in person to hear testimony directly from those whose lives are being affected.

Nearly four years ago, the State of Mississippi imposed one of its largest-ever fines on Drax for serious air pollution violations. Since then, the situation has only given rise to greater concern. Two national mass tort law firms in the U.S are now gathering plaintiffs from Gloster to seek compensation for the illnesses, loss of enjoyment of life, and damage to property caused by prolonged exposure to toxic air pollution from Drax's wood pellet facility. This is a growing health emergency and the people of Gloster are suffering.

We urge you and the MDEQ to stand with the children, the elderly and all residents affected by this pollution - not with the industry responsible for it. We hope that you will take this opportunity to prioritise the public health of the Gloster community by directing your regulators to do everything in their power to safeguard your residents, including voting 'no' on this permit following the evidentiary hearing.

Though Drax is a UK-based company, it is the people of Gloster, Mississippi, who are suffering the consequences. We believe it is unacceptable for any UK corporation to contribute to a public health crisis abroad.

We urge you to recognise the importance of protecting the health of Gloster, Mississippi and to take the necessary steps to ensure they can breathe clean, safe air.

Sincerely,

350 Humboldt

AbibiNsroma Foundation

Australian Forests and Climate Alliance

Axe Drax

Biofuelwatch

Biomass Action Group

Biomass Action Network

Calderdale Green New Deal

Campaign against Climate Change

Central Valley Air Quality Coalition

Christian Climate Action

Climate Communications Coalition

Climate Generation

Coal Action Network

Concerned Citizens of Northampton County

Corporate Watch

Earth Ethics, Inc

Earth Ethics, Inc.

Earth Thrive

Eco-Integrity Alliance

Education, Economics, Environmental, Climate and Health Organization (EEEECHO)

Environmental Protection Information Center

Extinction Rebellion Sheffield

Extinction Rebellion, Leicester, UK

Fern

Forests Forever

Frack free Leeds

Friends of the Earth (England, Wales & Northern Ireland)

Friends of the Earth Leeds

Fuel Poverty Action

Global Action Plan UK

Global Justice York

Grandparent Climate Action Durham (UK)

Grandparents Climate Action Durham

Green Squad

Greenpeace

Grwp Resilience CBC

Health for Extinction Rebellion

health-and-forest.org

Healthy Gulf

Indigenous Environmental Network

Institute for Policy Studies Climate Policy Program

Instituto para el Futuro Común Amerindio IFCA

John Muir Project

Just Transition Wakefield

Lifescape

Little Manila Rising

London Mining Network

Mighty Earth

Mississippi Rising Coalition

Mount Shasta Bioregional Ecology Center

Mums for Lungs

NOAH Friends of the Earth Denmark

North East Climate Justice Coalition

Northampton First

NRDC

Pacific Environment

Partnership for Policy Integrity

People & Planet Sheffield

Pivot Point

Rachel Carson Council

Reclaim the Power

Save Sledge Forest

Scientists for XR

Selby Friends of the Earth

Shujaa-Initiative

Sonoma County Climate Activist Network (SoCoCAN!)

South Yorkshire Climate Alliance

South Yorkshire Fossil Free

Southern Environmental Law Center

Southern Forest Conservation Coalition

Southern Forests Conservation Coalition

St Bon's Climate Action Group

Stand.earth

Stop Burning Trees Coalition

Sunflower Alliance

The Rachel Carson Council

Tipping Point UK

Valley Improvement Projects

Wakefield FoE

Weald Action Group

West Wales Climate Coalition

Wilbarston Wildlife

XR Calderdale

Yorkshire and Humber Climate Justice Coalition

GREENPEACE



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Corporate Watch









Life**cape**

Wild Landscapes. For Life.