

Open Letter to Governor Cooper: Stop the expansion of the wood pellet industry

Dear Governor Cooper,

We, the undersigned environmental and climate justice groups in the UK, are writing to urge you to say no to Enviva's plans to expand the wood pellet industry in North Carolina. We firmly stand in support of frontline groups' complaints about Enviva and share their disappointment as to the lack of action to address the rapidly expanding wood pellet production market in North Carolina.

If you are to be the climate champion that you claim, the climate, forest, biodiversity and environmental justice impacts of the wood pellet industry must be addressed.

As UK groups, we have a focus on North Carolina because many of your forests that are turned into pellets end up being burned in our power stations: Drax and Lynemouth. If the Enviva Ahoskie facility is permitted to expand, the equivalent of over 24,000 hectares of forest will be cut to meet its new capacity. We understand that North Carolina justice groups warn that this will lead to more logging trucks and more pollution.

In the UK, the same is true. The wood pellets that Enviva supplies to burn at Drax and Lynemouth Power Stations are producing [harmful air pollution](#) and Drax is facing [prosecution from the Health and Safety Executive](#) in the UK for risking the health of their workers through exposure to harmful wood dust from pellets.

Burning wood for energy in UK power stations is also making the [climate crisis worse](#) and Drax Power Station alone emitted over 13 million tonnes of CO₂ from burning wood in 2021. Any expansion of the Ahoskie pellet mill in the United States will also have consequences for us here and would further exacerbate these health and climate impacts as Enviva is expected to supply pellets to burn at the [Tees Renewable Energy Plant near Middlesbrough](#).

In 2021, 500 [scientists](#) from around the world signed an open letter about the impacts of wood bioenergy sourced from forests, warning: "regrowth takes time the world does not have to solve climate change. As numerous studies have shown, this burning of wood will increase warming for decades to centuries. That is true even when the wood replaces coal, oil or natural gas."

Although climate scientists agree that the world must significantly increase its ability to retain carbon in forests, American forests are [sequestering considerably less carbon today](#) than they did just 30 years ago. Forests are a vital natural carbon sink, and burning them for fuel is a dangerous policy that will exacerbate climate change, particularly since [burning biomass](#) is not carbon neutral and in fact produces *more* pollution and *more* carbon emissions than the coal it is intended to replace.

It is time to stop this dirty and destructive industry that is harming people, wildlife and the planet. We need standing, natural forests. Forests absorb carbon, filter our water and our air, protect us from dangerous storms and floods, and provide vital green spaces for nature and people.

For the sake of forests, wildlife, communities and the climate, we urge you to refuse this application for Enviva's Ahoskie mill expansion and to place a moratorium on any expansion of the wood pellet industry.

Yours sincerely,

Signed by:

1. Biofuelwatch
2. Axe Drax Group
3. Leeds Medact
4. Stop Burning Trees Coalition
5. Just Transition Wakefield
6. Wakefield Friends of the Earth
7. London Mining Network
8. United Kingdom Without Incineration Network (UKWIN)
9. War on Want
10. Operation Noah
11. Extinction Rebellion York
12. Leeds Friends of the Earth
13. Feral X
14. Extinction Rebellion Hammersmith and Fulham
15. Friends of the Earth Stourbridge
16. Sheffield Friends of the Earth
17. Friends of the Earth Cardiff
18. Extinction Rebellion Northampton
19. Hull Friends of the Earth
20. Leeds Trades Union Council
21. Wakefield District Young Labour
22. Thirsk Friends of the Earth
23. United Kingdom Without Incineration Network (UKWIN)
24. Extinction Rebellion Otley
25. Halifax and Calder Valley Unite Community
26. ScotE3 (Employment, Energy and Environment)
27. Youth Strike For Climate Liverpool
28. Tunbridge Wells Friends of the Earth
29. Extinction Rebellion Midlands
30. Friends of the Earth Pembrokeshire
31. Coal Action Network
32. Campaign Against Climate Change
33. Liverpool Friends of the Earth
34. Climate Action Stokesley and Villages Group
35. Croydon RM Unite the Union Branch
36. Money Rebellion
37. Extinction Rebellion Leicester
38. SINE (Stop Incineration North East)
39. Aberdeen Climate Action
40. Extinction Rebellion Leeds
41. Fossil Free East Yorkshire
42. Green Christian

43. Extinction Rebellion Aberdeen
44. Liverpool Medact
45. Frack Free Sussex
46. Frack Off London
47. Weald Action Group
48. Clapham Sustainability Group
49. Fuel Poverty Action
50. Feminist Exchange Network, Glasgow
51. Yorkshire and Humber Climate Justice Coalition
52. Norwich Friends of the Earth
53. EcoNexus, UK
54. (re)Generation Weston
55. Transition Edinburgh
56. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
57. Oxford Youth Strike
58. Extinction Rebellion North
59. Holy Apostles and Martyrs parish, Wallasey Our Common Home group
60. Fossil Free Greater Manchester
61. Global Justice Bradford
62. Extinction Rebellion Wandsworth
63. Lambeth Friends of the Earth
64. Extinction Rebellion Banbury
65. West Yorkshire Eco-Educators' Network
66. Brent Friends of the Earth
67. Richmondshire Climate Action Partnership
68. Campaign for the Protection of Rural England North and East Yorkshire
69. Extinction Rebellion Exeter
70. Manchester Trades Union Council
71. Extinction Rebellion Cymru
72. Extinction Rebellion Forres