

# AXE DRAX – NOT FORESTS, COMMUNITIES OR THE CLIMATE

Drax Power Station is the UK's largest burner and loudest promoter of biomass. Drax burns more wood than any power station in the world, for which it got £729 million from bill payers' pockets in 2017. That's £2m a day and £27 per household - to damage forests and biodiversity, pollute communities including in Yorkshire, and make climate change worse!

## **Burning all the things**

Drax also burned 2m tonnes of coal in 2017 and is seeking a government subsidy to build the UK's biggest gas power station.

## **Wood pellets**

To keep this up, Drax imports pellets made from 13 million tonnes of wood every year – that's

more than the UK can produce. With all this wood, Drax contributes less than 1% of the UK's final energy demand.

Most of Drax's pellets are imported from North America and many come from highly biodiverse coastal wetland forests in the southern US, habitat for species including bears and salamanders. Some pellets come from monoculture pine plantations which are replacing such forests.

This is bad news for the climate: forests store and absorb large amounts of carbon. Trees take decades to grow while pellets are burned in an instant. Studies show that the climate impacts of burning trees for biomass electricity are no better than

those of coal over a period of many decades— i.e. during the crucial period when global carbon emissions must be rapidly cut.

Many of the US pellet plants and export facilities that supply Drax



are located in communities already suffering from high levels of industrial pollution and social inequality, exacerbated by the noise, dust and heavy traffic of pellet operations.

### **Drax still burns fossil fuels**

If Drax wasn't burning millions of tonnes of wood, it would have had to shut down due to regulations on air pollution from coal. Subsidies for biomass allow it to keep burning coal, which has the highest upfront carbon emissions of all fossil fuels (though wood can have even higher ones!). Much of Drax's coal comes from Colombia where opencast mines are linked to serious human rights abuses and land grabs.



Drax receives almost £2 million in subsidies every day, paid through a surcharge on electricity bills. This surcharge ought to finance genuinely renewable energy such as wind, waves and sun, not forest destruction and fossil fuel burning.

Drax now proposes to replace its remaining coal-burning units with ones that burn gas. If this goes ahead, Drax would become the UK's largest gas burner too – locking us in to another generation of reliance on fossil fuels at exactly the time when we need to be moving away from them. Drax needs to be closed down and replaced with something more sustainable.

### **What can I do?**

- Email [biofuelwatch@gmail.com](mailto:biofuelwatch@gmail.com) to sign up to our newsletters and email alerts;
- Let us know if you'd like to get more involved with this campaign, or organise a biomass film screening in your area.



***“The polluters, the big companies ...continue to put their pollution in vulnerable areas where people don't have the money to fight against them, where people have been disenfranchised over the years. So they go to African American communities and poorer communities.”***

**- Cary Rogers, Richmond County, North Carolina**

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