

THIS ELECTION, HELP US TO MAKE BIG BIOMASS A BIG DEAL



2019 GENERAL ELECTION: A VITAL OPPORTUNITY FOR CLIMATE ACTION & AN END TO BIOMASS BURNING

It's now official that we will be voting for our next UK government on Thursday 12 December and among the many important issues which will be decided, this election is a vital opportunity to call on parliamentary candidates to take urgent action to protect our forests, our wildlife, our communities and our climate.

Thanks to the incredible work of environmental campaigners, the climate crisis is near the top of the political agenda for the first time and Parliament declared a Climate Emergency in May.

There have also been amazing wins to protect endangered forests in the Southern USA from the biomass industry as North Carolina's new clean energy plan has recognised the devastating impacts of the wood pellet industry on natural forests.

However, the biomass industry is still claiming that burning wood for electricity is a key part of the climate solution and the UK government is continuing to subsidise the fossil fuel and biomass industries which are destroying precious habitats, harming wildlife, polluting communities and making the climate crisis worse.

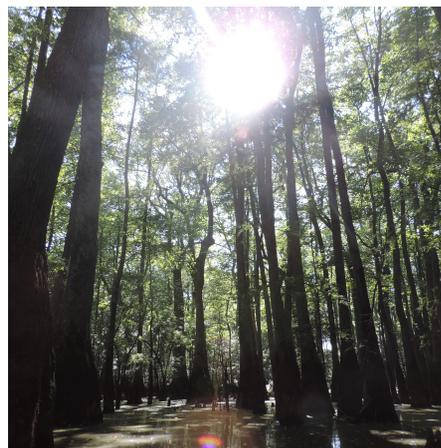
This is why we need to use this election to persuade politicians to end their support for the fossil fuel and biomass companies which are causing the climate crisis.

Instead, we need them to invest in genuine climate solutions such as protecting and restoring our natural forests and supporting renewable wind, wave and solar power.

BIOFUELWATCH'S GENERAL ELECTION PRIORITIES FOR PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATES

Biofuelwatch is calling on all the major political parties to commit to protecting natural forests, wildlife, communities and the climate by:

- Supporting the transfer of around £1.3 billion in UK renewable subsidies from biomass burning to genuinely renewable wind, wave and solar power
- No longer classifying the industrial burning of wood as renewable energy
- Recognising that bioenergy with carbon capture and storage (BECCS) is not a climate solution



Let's make big biomass a big deal this election and call for real climate solutions!

WHAT'S WRONG WITH BIOMASS BURNING?

The biomass industry is clear-felling vast areas of biodiverse forests in Europe and the Southern USA to burn in UK power stations like Drax in Yorkshire and Lynemouth in Northumberland.

As well as being a huge coal power station, Drax is the biggest burner of wood for electricity in the world and the

UK's single largest carbon emitter.

This clear-felling and biomass burning is devastating forests, threatening wildlife, polluting communities and making the climate crisis worse.

The world's biggest pellet producer, Enviva, is the main supplier of wood pellets to

burn in Drax and Lynemouth. It is now planning a mass expansion of its clear-felling in the Southern US.

We urgently need to stop the biomass industry in its tracks and this election is a great chance to convince politicians that burning trees for electricity is not a climate solution.

WHAT ARE THE SOLUTIONS?

A key solution to stopping deforestation for biomass burning is to transfer the huge subsidies from biomass power stations to renewable wind, wave and solar power.

As well as supporting renewable energy, it is also vital to save our existing natural forests and restore them rather than replace them with monoculture industrial tree plantations.



WHAT CAN I ASK PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATES TO DO?

We have a pledge which you can ask your Parliamentary candidates to sign:



For forests, communities and the climate, I pledge to work towards transferring subsidies from biomass burning to wind, wave & solar power

It's a great idea to take the pledge along to any hustings or events with your parliamentary candidates and ask them to take a picture with it. You can find a version here which you can download and print.

You can email the pledge form to your candidates here.

You can also ask your parliamentary candidates a question about biomass burning.

HOW CAN I ASK A PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATE A QUESTION?

You can ask your Parliamentary candidates a question when:

- Candidates or canvassers come knocking on your door.
- In an email or letter directly to your candidates or to a local newspaper.
- At a hustings meeting, where candidates debate policies and answer questions from the audience. You can find our Hustings Guide here.
- You can find information about hustings in your area in your local papers or online. For guidance on organising your own, visit www.electoralcommission.org.uk.
- By calling your local radio station. They often hold phone-ins around election time and ask for questions from the listeners.



You can find out how to vote here and who your Parliamentary candidates are here.

EXAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATES

See bullet points under each question for extra information.

1. What will you do to make tackling climate change and deforestation a priority?

2. Scientists agree that our natural forests play a vital role in reducing our carbon emissions. What plans does your party have to protect and restore natural forests?

- The biomass industry claims it is replacing the forests it burns with new trees. However, these are usually monoculture plantations which support almost no life and store less carbon than natural forests.
- The most effective way to cut our emissions is to protect and restore our existing forests.

3. Do you regard burning of wood in power stations as renewable energy?

- The biomass industry argues that burning wood is renewable because new trees will grow to absorb the emissions produced by felling, transporting and burning trees today.
- However, it will take decades or longer for new trees to absorb these emissions. This is time we do not have if we are to solve the climate crisis.
- Nor is bioenergy with carbon capture and storage technology (BECCS) a climate solution. Not only is the technology untested and widely regarded as unfeasible, but it would also involve the large-scale destruction of natural forests and agricultural land to grow plantations to burn.
- We need to cut our emissions now and one of the best ways to absorb them is to protect and restore our natural forests, not burn them in power stations.

4. Do you know where power stations like Drax source their wood pellets to burn?

- A large proportion of the wood currently burned by UK power stations comes from the clear-felling of biodiverse wetland forests in the Southern USA. These forests are home to many endangered species and help to protect communities from flooding and natural disaster.
- Biomass burning is a disaster for forests, wildlife and the climate.
- It is also increasing environmental injustice as communities near pellet plants and biomass power stations suffer from harmful noise and air and water pollution.

5. What plans does your party have to support renewable wind, wave and solar power?

- At the moment, around £1.3 billion in UK renewable subsidies is being used to fund biomass burning in huge power stations like Drax in Yorkshire and Lynemouth in Northumberland.
- These subsidies must be transferred to real renewables like wind, wave and solar power.
- This can be done through secondary legislation and would help to save forests, cut carbon emissions, protect communities from pollution and create new green jobs.

Thanks for taking action for forests, communities and the climate this election. If you have any questions please email biofuelwatch@gmail.com