

Submitter: Diane Hodiak
On Behalf Of: 350 Deschutes
Committee: House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment
Measure: HB3003

I am Diane Hodiak, Executive Director of 350 Deschutes, a climate organization working in the space of climate policy, education, and actions. We have about 2000 stakeholders. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

I urge you not to allow a tax credit through HB 3003 to any entities using electricity generated through forest biomass burning. Providing tax credits in this manner will encourage the use of biomass for electricity generation. We should not be encouraging the use of biomass burning under any circumstances. It is a threat to health and climate in Oregon's communities. Here's why encouraging biomass burning is a bad idea.

According to a Study by Whittaker, Roder, and Thornley, from the Tyndall Center for Climate Research, today's biomass-burning power plants actually produce more global warming CO2 than fossil fuel plants: 65 percent more CO2 per megawatt hour than modern coal plants and 285 percent more CO2 than natural gas combined cycle plants (which use both a gas and steam turbine together).

This wrongful carbon neutral designation could also imperil the climate and put lives and health at risk from pollution. Trees, Trash, and Toxics, a comprehensive Rockefeller-funded study done by Partners for Policy integrity, shows that emissions from biomass power plants produce 800% more pollutants than natural gas plants. And we know that Natural gas is another fossil fuel with its own dirty life cycle emission profile. Scientists point out the impracticality of biomass as a fuel source. According to Mary Booth, researcher for PFPI: "burning trees for electricity is extremely inefficient and emits more carbon pollution than coal. No amount of industry spin can change the basic physics of wood combustion." See their website biomess101.org. Trees are much better kept growing where they can continue to sequester carbon.

PFPI found that Biomass plants, though they emit more pollutants than fossil fuel plants, are not required to meet the same emission standards. The Clean Air Act allows biomass plants to emit up to 2.5 times more pollution than a coal plant. Some biomass plants become more like waste incinerators, burning waste lumber and demolition debris, although they don't need to meet the same regulatory guidelines as waste incinerators.

The American Lung Association is concerned about biomass plant pollutants like particles, sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, arsenic, lead, mercury, carbon monoxide, benzene and formaldehyde, which encourage increased asthma, death, cancer, and cardiovascular and respiratory disease. People living in communities where a biomass plant exists, particularly diabetics, elderly, and children, and those with chronic illness, are at high risk.

I submit that instead of a tax credit, that biomass burning facilities should be asked to

pay for the social cost of carbon. We know that unhealthy air pollution contributes to death and disease. Biomass facilities should be asked to pay this social cost of carbon for every ton of carbon that they emit.

Although there is no form of energy that is 100% clean, Biomass energy is an inferior energy source on multiple levels. Please do not worsen an already bad situation by offering a tax credit to encourage its use.