

# PRESS RELEASE

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## **Rally/Press Conference Urges Governor & Lt. Governor to Limit Biomass Subsidies**

**A statewide coalition of environmental, health and social justice groups is asking Governor Patrick and Lt. Governor Murray to stand by the Administration's 2010 pledge to limit ratepayer-funded incentives for biomass combustion power plants that burn wood for electricity.** In the past 2 years, residents from across the state have signed over 135,000 petitions, postcards, letters and emails asking for stronger laws. Some groups are demanding a complete moratorium on state permits for biomass electricity until outstanding questions about health and climate change impacts are answered.

"The proposed regulations are a clear retreat from the sound science on biomass energy commissioned by the Administration and funded by Massachusetts taxpayers," said James McCaffrey, Director of the Sierra Club's Massachusetts' Chapter. "We can only assume industry played a role in getting the Administration to back off its commitment to protect our forests, the environment, and public health. Massachusetts ratepayers should not be paying more for dirty, polluting forms of energy that worsen the impacts of climate change."

"After working hand-in-hand with the Patrick Administration to bring biomass energy incentives into line with the science-based analysis the Administration itself commissioned, we are dismayed to witness their swift retreat in the face of pressure from certain biomass industry interests," said Sue Reid, Director of Conservation Law Foundation-Massachusetts. "These recent developments call into question the commitment to build a true clean energy economy."

"Today we're delivering 5,000 more petitions to the Patrick Administration. People are still outraged about these incinerators that burn trees for electricity. They have worse air pollution than coal and don't deserve our clean energy money," said Meg Sheehan, who ran the campaign in 2010 to get a ballot question to keep biomass combustion electricity out of the state's renewable portfolio standard.

Toxics Action Project Center's Director Sylvia Brodie said, "Common sense tells us burning wood is a significant source of particulate matter in our air. These fine particles can lodge in our lungs and cause breathing problems and disease. This is not something that we should be subsidizing."

Last year, Massachusetts Medical Society urged the Legislature to “remove government incentives for biomass combustion electricity plants.” American Lung Association also opposes incentives saying, “burning biomass could lead to significant increases in emissions of nitrogen oxides, particulate matter and sulfur dioxide and have severe impacts on the health of children, older adults, and people with lung diseases.”

Over twenty-four groups are calling for stronger regulations: Sierra Club, Conservation Law Foundation, Mass Audubon, Toxics Action Center, Clean Water Action Alliance of Massachusetts, Environmental League of Massachusetts, American Lung Association in New England, Environment Massachusetts, MassPIRG, Chelsea Creek Action Group, Massachusetts Breast Cancer Coalition, Natural Resources of Maine, Natural Resources Defense Council, The Wilderness Society, Clean Air Task Force, Greenpeace, Massachusetts Forest Watch, Concerned Citizens of Franklin County, Massachusetts, Concerned Citizens of Russell, Massachusetts, ARISE for Social Justice, Springfield, Massachusetts, Stop Toxic Incineration in Springfield, Partnership for Policy Integrity, Jones River Watershed Association, Massachusetts Climate Action Network

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