

LETTER FROM SCIENTISTS TO THE EU PARLIAMENT REGARDING
FOREST BIOMASS
January 9, 2018

To Members of the European Parliament,

As the European Parliament commendably moves to expand the renewable energy directive, we strongly urge members of Parliament to amend the present directive to avoid expansive harm to the world's forests and the acceleration of climate change. The flaw in the directive lies in provisions that would let countries, power plants and factories claim credit toward renewable energy targets for deliberately cutting down trees to burn them for energy. The solution should be to restrict the forest biomass eligible under the directive to residues and wastes.

For decades, European producers of paper and timber products have generated electricity and heat as beneficial by-products using wood wastes and limited forest residues. Since most of these waste materials would decompose and release carbon dioxide within a few years, using them to displace fossil fuels can reduce net carbon dioxide emissions to the atmosphere in a few years as well. By contrast, cutting down trees for bioenergy releases carbon that would otherwise stay locked up in forests, and diverting wood otherwise used for wood products will cause more cutting elsewhere to replace them.

Even if forests are allowed to regrow, using wood deliberately harvested for burning will increase carbon in the atmosphere and warming for decades to centuries – as many studies have shown – even when wood replaces coal, oil or natural gas. The reasons are fundamental and occur regardless of whether forest management is “sustainable.” Burning wood is inefficient and therefore emits far more carbon than burning fossil fuels for each kilowatt hour of electricity produced. Harvesting wood also properly leaves some biomass behind to protect soils, such as roots and small branches, which decompose and emit carbon. The result is a large “carbon debt.” Re-growing trees and displacement of fossil fuels may eventually pay off this “carbon debt” but only over long periods. Overall, allowing the harvest and burning of wood under the directive will transform large reductions otherwise achieved through solar and wind into large increases in carbon in the atmosphere by 2050.

Time matters. Placing an additional carbon load in the atmosphere for decades means permanent damages due to more rapid melting of glaciers and thawing of permafrost, and more packing of heat and acidity into the world's oceans. At a critical moment when countries need to be “buying time” against climate change, this approach amounts to “selling” the world's limited time to combat it.

The adverse implications not just for carbon but for global forests and biodiversity are also large. More than 100% of Europe's annual harvest of wood would be needed to supply just one third of the expanded renewable energy directive. Because demand for wood and paper will remain, the result will be increased degradation of forests around the world. The example Europe would set for other countries would be even more dangerous. Europe has been properly encouraging countries such as Indonesia and Brazil to protect their forests,

but the message of this directive is “cut your forests so long as someone burns them for energy.” Once countries invest in such efforts, fixing the error may become impossible. If the world moves to supply just an additional 3% of global energy with wood, it must double its commercial cuttings of the world’s forests.

By 1850, the use of wood for bioenergy helped drive the near deforestation of western Europe even when Europeans consumed far less energy than they do today. Although coal helped to save the forests of Europe, the solution to replacing coal is not to go back to burning forests, but instead to replace fossil fuels with low carbon sources, such as solar and wind. We urge European legislators to amend the present directive to restrict eligible forest biomass to appropriately defined residues and wastes because the fates of much of the world’s forests and the climate are literally at stake.

Initial signatories:

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385. Margaret E Conroy; PhD; Rutgers
386. Martin Stervander; Post-Doctoral Fellow; University of Oregon
387. Oskar Brattstrom; Post-Doctoral Fellow; University of Cambridge
388. Susanne Åkesson; Professor; Lund University
389. Anders Hedenström; Professor; Lund University
390. Nayden Chakarov; Post-Doctoral Fellow; Bielefeld University
391. Rebecca Tittler; PhD; Concordia University
392. Karin Rengefors ; Professor; Lund University
393. Magnus Ellström ; PhD; Lund University
394. Ashwini Chhatre; Professor; Indian School of Business
395. Thanos Smanis; PhD Candidate; Environmental Consultant of HCL Group
396. Dr. Jochen A.G. Jaeger ; Professor; Concordia University Montreal
397. Jukka Lausmaa; PhD; RISE Research Institutes of Sweden
398. David Coomes; Professor; University of Cambridge
399. Luca; Post-Doctoral Fellow; Radboud University
400. Lars Ericson; Professor Emeritus; Umeå University
401. Nathan S. Debortoli; Post-Doctoral Fellow; McGill University
402. Sonia Wesche; Professor; University of Ottawa
403. Suvi Ponnikas; Post-Doctoral Fellow; Lund University
404. Dr. Maura Hanrahan; Professor; University of Lethbridge
405. Michael Allchin; PhD Candidate; Quesnel River Research Centre, University of Northern BC
406. Jody Peters; PhD; University of Notre Dame
407. Alex Latta; Professor; Wilfrid Laurier University
408. Leah Germer; Masters; World Bank
409. Martin Scheringer; Professor; Masaryk-Universität, Brünn
410. John-Michael Davis; Post-Doctoral Fellow; University of Illinois Urbana-Campaign

411. Rajmund Michalski; Professor; Institute of Environmental Engineering, Polish Academy of Sciences
412. Daniel Müller; Research Scholar; Leibniz Institute of Agricultural Development in Transition Economies
413. Held; Professor; University of Hamburg
414. Jeffrey Milder; Research Scholar; Rainforest Alliance & Cornell University
415. Marcia C M Marques; Professor; UFPR - Federal University of Parana, Brazil
416. Sissel Sjöberg; Post-Doctoral Fellow; Lund University
417. Annie Lalancette; Post-Doctoral Fellow; Saint Mary's University
418. Bradley B Walters, PhD; Professor; Mount Allison University (Canada)
419. Alfredo; Post-Doctoral Fellow; Museum and Institute of Zoology, PAS
420. Fabien L. Condamine; Research Scholar; CNRS
421. William C. Burns; Professor; Co-Executive Director, Forum for Climate Engineering Assessment, American University
422. Elizabeth Allison; Professor; California Institute of Integral Studies
423. Dagnija Blumberga; Professor; Riga Technical University
424. George Sevastopulo; Professor Emeritus; Department of Geology, Trinity College Dublin
425. Henrik Selin; Professor; Frederick S Pardee School of Global Studies at Boston University
426. Corrado Boragno; Professor; Università di Genova
427. Jean-Paul Bourque; Founder of RIRE; Retired Independent Research in Ecology (RIRE)
428. Edwin J. Green; Professor; Rutgers University
429. Sergio Carrà; Professor Emeritus; Politecnico Milano, Italy
430. Teo Mora; Professor; University of Genoa
431. Karen Holl; Professor; University of California, Santa Cruz
432. Henning Rodhe; Professor Emeritus; Retired from Department of Meteorology, Stockholm Univ.
433. Nora Davis; Research Scholar; Public sector
434. Jakob Skovgaard; Research Scholar; Lund University
435. Gabriela Kuetting; Professor; Rutgers University
436. Johan Lind; Research Scholar; Stockholm University
437. Tali Neta; Professor; Lethbridge College
438. Anna Sugiyama; Post-Doctoral Fellow; Yale University
439. Jacob von Oelreich; Research Engineer, Phil Lic; KTH Royal Institute of Technology
440. Jessica Green; Professor; New York University
441. Prof Susan Page; Professor; University of Leicester
442. Celia A. Harvey; Conservation International
443. Paal Krokene; Research Scholar; Norwegian Institute of Bioeconomy Research
444. Jeremy Firestone; Professor; Director, Center for Carbon-free Power Integration; University of Delaware
445. Bengt Gunnar Jonsson; Professor; President of the Europe Section of the SCB; Mid Sweden University
446. Anders Nielsen; Research Scholar; CEES University of Oslo
447. Cornelia Spetea Wiklund; Professor; University of Gothenburg
448. Wolf L. Eiserhardt; Associate Professor; Aarhus University
449. Anja Rammig; Professor; Technical University of Munich
450. Paul Eric Aspholm; Research Scholar; NIBIO
451. Guido Visconti; Professor Emeritus; Università dell'Aquila, L'Aquila, Italy
452. Sam Rabin; Research Scholar; Karlsruhe Institute of Technology
453. Inger Auestad; Professor; HVL
454. Anders Bryn; Professor; University of Oslo
455. Ulrika Beier; PhD; SLU
456. Hanna Sigeman ; PhD Candidate; Lund University
457. Zoltan Barta; Professor; University of Debrecen
458. Anders K. Wollan; Research Scholar; Natural History Museum, University of Oslo
459. Eli Rinde; Research Scholar; NIVA
460. Johan Asplund; Research Scholar; Norwegian University of Life Sciences
461. Anna Persson; Post-Doctoral Fellow; Lund University
462. Barbara Zimmermann; Research Scholar; Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences
463. Mia Vedel Sørensen; PhD Candidate; NTNU
464. Eveliina Kallioniemi; Research Scholar; Norwegian Institute of Bioeconomy Research
465. Riccardo Guastini; Professor Emeritus; Tarello Institute for Legal Philosophy, University of Genoa
466. Charlotte Epstein; Professor; University of Sydney

467. Massimo Verdoya; Professor; University of Genova, Dept. of Earth, Environmental and Life Sciences
468. Hanna Laakkonen; Research manager; Lund university
469. Bruce Marsh; Research Scholar; CERN
470. Emma Morgan; Post-Doctoral Fellow; Charles University in Prague
471. Carsten Meyer; Research group leader; German Centre of Integrative Biodiversity Research
472. Stefan Ernst; Masters; Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin
473. Florian Poetzschner; Bachelor; Humboldt-University zu Berlin
474. Yann Clough; Professor; Centre for Environmental and Climate Research, Lund University
475. Andrew Foggo; Professor; University of Plymouth
476. Gustavo de L. T. Oliveira; Visiting Assistant Professor; Environmental Studies, Swarthmore College
477. Dr. José Sarukhán, Former Rector, Universidad Autónoma de México
478. Neil Losin; PhD; Day's Edge Productions
479. Tim Forsyth; Professor; London School of Economics and Political Science
480. Philipp Gärtner; Post-Doctoral Fellow; Leibniz Centre for Agricultural Landscape Research
481. Julie G. Zaehring; Post-Doctoral Fellow; Centre for Development and Environment, University of Bern
482. Rutger A. Vos; Research Scholar; Naturalis Biodiversity Center, the Netherlands
483. Katie Horgan; PhD Candidate; University of Zurich
484. Timothy Boucher; Masters; Self
485. Petra Dvorak; Masters; Supsi
486. Jerry Skoglund; Associate Professor; Swedish University of Agricult. Sciences
487. Michel Sliger; Research professional; Université de Montréal
488. chiara; Research Scholar; University of Zurich
489. Kateřina Geržová; Research Scholar; Palackého University in Olomouc
490. Nicholas Watts; Research Scholar; Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London
491. Stephanie Mayer; Masters; WSL Institute for Snow and Avalanche Research SLF
492. Lian Pin Koh; Professor; University of Adelaide
493. Gerlinde B. De Deyn; Professor; Wageningen University
494. Camille Beasley; Masters; FL Dept of Environmental Protection
495. Tomas Jedlicka; Masters; Waldorf school Brno, Czech Republic
496. Deirdre Clark; PhD; University of Iceland
497. Christopher Martius; Research Scholar; Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR)
498. Kamila Janeckova; Masters; CEMS, Master of International Management
499. Justine Atkins; PhD Candidate; Princeton University
500. Roylyn Nielson; No formal education just common sense; Friend of the forests
501. Hana Novotná; Masters; Charles University
502. Ciro Cabal; PhD Candidate; Princeton University
503. Marie Sarazova; Research Technician; Monasterium Laboratory, Münster, Germany
504. Kathleen Quinn; Associate Scientist; Invicro
505. Vishal Thacker; Masters; protagonist
506. Jana Burivalova; Masters, Biology teacher; Zakladni Skola
507. Farhan Raza; Post-Doctoral Fellow; Weill Cornell medical college
508. Pamela McElwee; Professor; Rutgers University
509. Ian McFadden; PhD Candidate; UCLA
510. Wolfgang Schwan; 3 years of University; Concerned Human
511. Alex Washburne; Post-Doctoral Fellow; Montana State University
512. Karishmaa Pai; Masters; WFC
513. Eric Swanson; Citizen; Sierra Club
514. Caroline Farrior; Assistant Professor; University of Texas at Austin, Integrative Biology
515. Kimberly Neely; Research Scholar; Mendel Biological Solutions
516. Felicity Wynne; PhD Candidate; Plymouth University
517. Jane Baldwin; PhD Candidate; Princeton University
518. David Edwards; Professor; University of Sheffield
519. Thomas Lovejoy; Professor; George Mason University
520. Daniela Miteva; Professor; Ohio State University
521. Vera Chouinard; Professor; McMaster University
522. Maike Nesper; PhD; ETH Zurich
523. Richard Waring; Professor Emeritus; Oregon State University

524. Walter Stephenson; Bachelor in Environmental Engineering; George School
525. De. Rainer Bussmann, Professor Emeritus, Saving Knowledge
526. Spencer C.H. Barrett, Professor, University
527. Himadri Pakrasi , Professor, Director, International Center for Energy, Environment and Sustainability, Washington University in St. Louis
528. James Mallet, Professor, Harvard University and UCL London
529. David Zilberman, Professor, University of California at Berkeley
530. Paul Berry, Professor, University of Michigan, Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology
531. Ricardo Rozzi, Professor, Director, Sub-Antarctic Biocultural Research Conservation Program, University of North Texas (USA) & Universidad de Magallanes (Chile)
532. Mark E. Olson , Professor, Instituto de Biología, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México
533. William H. Schlesinger, Professor Emeritus, Nicholas School of the Environment, Duke University
534. Jorge V. Crisci, Professor Emeritus, Universidad Nacional de La Plata, Argentina
535. William F. Laurance , Professor, Distinguished Research Professor, Australian Laureate, and Prince Bernhard Chair in International Nature Conservation; Fellow of the Australian Academy of Science, James Cook University, Cairns, Australia
536. Christopher Leaver CBE,FRS,FRSE, Professor Emeritus, University of Oxford
537. Alan P. Covich, Professor, University of Georgia
538. Harold Mooney, Professor Emeritus, Stanford University
539. Richard Daley, Masters, EMD Consulting Group
540. Patrick Osborne, PhD, Former Executive Director, Harris World Ecology Center, UM-St. Louis
541. Dr. Christopher Davidson, PhD, Idaho Botanical Research Foundation
542. Nina Lundholm, Research Scientist or Scholar, University of Copenhagen
543. Thomas Struhsaker, Professor Emeritus, Duke University
544. Claire Kremen, Professor, University of California Berkeley
545. Toby Gardner, Research Scientist or Scholar, Stockholm Environment Institute
546. David W. Inouye, Professor Emeritus, University of Maryland
547. David D Ackerly, Professor, Univ California Berkeley
548. Thomas J. Givnish, Professor, University of Wisconsin-Madison
549. James C Aronson, Research Scientist or Scholar; Missouri Botanical Garden
550. Warren R Muir, PhD, Granite Research Institute
551. David Creech, Professor Emeritus; Research Scientist or Scholar, SFA State University
552. Kenneth Olsen, Professor, Washington University in St. Louis
553. Bruce A. Stein, PhD, National Wildlife Federation
554. Patricia Vickers-Rich, Professor, Swinburne University of Technology, Department of Chemistry and Biotechnology
555. David White, Professor Emeritus, Loyola University
556. Anne Ehrlich, Research Scientist or Scholar, Stanford University
557. Brent D. Mishler, Professor, Integrative Biology, University of California, Berkeley
558. Toby Bradshaw, Professor, Department of Biology, University of Washington
559. Charles Perrings, Professor, Arizona State University
- 560 May Berenbaum, Professor, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
561. Fariborz Zelli, Associate Professor, Lund University
562. John W. Terborgh, Professor Emeritus, Duke University
563. Stephen D. Hopper AC, Professor, Professor of Biodiversity, The University of Western Australia, and former CEO and Chief Scientists, Royal Botanic Gardens Kew
564. David Mabberley, Professor, Wadham College University of Oxford, UK
565. Phil Devries, Professor, University of New Orleans
566. Andreia Figueiredo, PhD Student, University of Missouri - St. Louis
567. Amy Kirkham, PhD Candidate, University of Alaska Fairbanks

568. Daniel Janzen, Professor of Conservation Biology, University of Pennsylvania, Member US National Academy of Sciences
569. Juan Isaac Moreira Hernandez, PhD Candidate, University of Missouri-St. Louis
570. Ib Friis, Professor Emeritus, Natural History Museum of Denmark, member of the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters and the Royal Physiographic Society of Lund (Academy for the Natural Sciences, Medicine and Technology)
571. Rodrigo Mendez, Research Scientist or Scholar, centro de investigacion cientifica y de educacion superior de ensenada, bc Mexico
572. Michael Clegg, Professor Emeritus, University of California, Irvine; past foreign secretary US National Academy of Sciences
573. Jeffrey D. Sachs, Professor, Columbia University
574. Patricia G. Parker, Professor, University of Missouri - St. Louis
575. Alan Weakley, Professor, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
576. Jeremy Bruhl, Professor, University of New England; Director, N.C.W. Beadle Herbarium
577. Hugh Possingham, Professor, The University of Queensland
588. Mary. T. K. Arroyo, Professor, Institute de Ecologia & Biodiversidad
589. Cagan H Sekercioglu, Professor, University of Utah
590. Michael MacCracken, Research Scientist or Scholar; Chief Scientist for Climate Change Programs, Climate Institute
591. Calvin Qualset, Professor Emeritus, University of California
592. Peter Crane FRS, Professor Emeritus, Oak Spring Garden Foundation
593. Osvaldo Sala, Professor, Arizona State University
594. Nicola Ripley, Masters, Betty Ford Alpine Gardens
595. Steve O'Kane, Professor, University of Northern Iowa
596. Christopher P. Dunn, Professor, Cornell Botanic Gardens
597. Carl Safina, Professor, Stony Brook University
- 598 Peter Ellis, Research Scientist or Scholar, The Nature Conservancy
599. Peter Gleick Pacific Institute, PhD, Pacific Institute
600. Andrew Beattie, Professor Emeritus, Macquarie university
601. James Bignaut, Professor, Stellenbosch University
602. Kingsley Dixon, Professor, Curtin University, Western Australia
603. Marleen Schafer, Masters, Pro Natura
604. Loren Rieseberg, Professor, University of British Columbia
605. Gerardo Ceballos, Professor; PhD, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México
606. J Julio Camarero, Research Scientist or Scholar, IPE-CSIC
607. Leon Green, PhD Candidate, University of Gothenburg
608. Ghilleen Prance, Professor Emeritus, Former Director, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew
609. Mats Lindeskog, Research Scientist or Scholar, Lund University, Sweden
610. Debora Arlt, Research Scientist or Scholar, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences
611. Ulrika Palme, Research Scientist or Scholar, Chalmers University of Technology
612. David Moreno Mateos, Research Scientist or Scholar, Basque centre for CLimate Change - BC3
613. Christian Körner, Professor Emeritus, University of Basel, Switzerland
614. Peter Endress, Professor Emeritus, Professor Emeritus, University of Zurich, Switzerland, Member of German Academy of Sciences Leopoldina
615. Enrico Rizzuto, Professor, University of Naples - Italy
616. Fang Yin, PhD Candidate, IAMO
617. Birgitta Bremer, Professor Emeritus, The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences
618. Harith Farooq, PhD Candidate, University of Aveiro, Portugal, Gothenburg University, Sweden
619. Sine Kragh Petersen, Masters, University of Copenhagen
620. Jane Phillips-Conroy, Professor Emeritus, Washington University

621. Juan D. Carrillo, Post-Doctoral Fellow, University of Gothenburg
622. Tomáš Bujna, Lecturer, TC Business School
623. Matthias Baumann, Post-Doctoral Fellow, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin
624. Alec Christie, PhD Candidate, University of Cambridge
625. Calum Brown, Post-Doctoral Fellow, Karlsruhe Institute of Technology
626. Rose Andrew, Research Scientist or Scholar, University of New England
627. Paul Cannon, Research Scientist or Scholar, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew
628. Simone Gingrich, Research Scientist or Scholar, Institute of Social Ecology, Alpen-Adria Universität
629. Meredith Blackwell, Professor Emeritus, Louisiana State University
630. Elizabeth Bourne, Post-Doctoral Fellow, Berlin Centre for Genomics in Biodiversity Research
631. Luke Dollar, Professor, Catawba College
632. M.F. Wallis de Vries, Professor, De Vlinderstichting / Dutch Butterfly Conservation
633. John W. Fitzpatrick, Professor, Executive Director, Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Cornell University
634. R. Henrik Nilsson, Research Scientist or Scholar, University of Gothenburg
635. Pieter Baas, Professor Emeritus, Naturalis Biodiversity Center and Leiden University
636. Barbara M Thiers, Vice President, The New York Botanical Garden
637. W. Hardy Eshbaugh, Professor Emeritus, Miami University
638. Roy E Halling, Research Scientist or Scholar, New York Botanical Garden
639. Janet Simkin, Research Scientist or Scholar, British Lichen Society
640. David Barton Bray, Professor, Florida International University
641. William L. Crepet, Professor, Cornell University
642. Peter White, Professor, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
643. Neil Snow, Professor, Pittsburg State University
644. Maria Isabel Loza Rivera, PhD Candidate, University of Missouri Saint Louis
645. José Blanco, Post-Doctoral Fellow, INRA
646. John J. Engel, Curator Emeritus, The Field Museum, Chicago, IL 60605
647. Alfredo Romero Muñoz, PhD Candidate, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin
648. Johanne Pelletier, Post-Doctoral Fellow, Cornell University
649. Fernando O. Zuloaga, Professor; Instituto de Botánica Darwinion, IBODA, Argentina
650. Donna Ford-Werntz, West Virginia University
651. David Boufford, Research Scientist or Scholar, Harvard University
652. Elsa Redmond, Research Scientist or Scholar, American Museum of Natural History
653. Charles S. Spencer, Curator, American Museum of Natural History
654. Juan Manuel Dupuy, Research Scientist or Scholar, Centro de Investigación Científica de Yucatán
655. Rosalind Gleave, Masters, Cambridge University
656. David Galbraith, Head of Science Department, Royal Botanical Gardens (Canada)
657. James S. Quinn, Professor, McMaster University
658. Stephen Blackmore, Professor, Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh
659. Paul Smith, Botanic Gardens, Conservation International