



## Friends of the Jordan River Watershed, Inc.

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Governor Jennifer Granholm  
D-Northville  
P.O. Box 30013  
Lansing, Michigan 48909

Dear Governor Granholm,

The rush to build wood burning biomass plants across Michigan raises serious concerns for the future of our forests. Wood burning biomass plants receive huge government subsidies (our tax dollars) under the guise of being renewable and carbon neutral. Subsidies diverted to biomass plants are undercutting efforts to develop truly green, sustainable energy sources.

Our forests should not be classified as a renewable resource for biomass. It takes minutes to burn a tree, decades to grow a new one. Several biomass plants currently operate in Michigan and more are being proposed in Rogers City, Gaylord, Traverse City, Frankfort, Mancelona and the Upper Peninsula. Each one uses a 50 - 75 mile radius to determine fuel availability. These boundaries overlap. Based on data from Massachusetts (where wood burning biomass has been temporarily banned), it takes 13,000 tons of wood to produce 1 MW of power for one year. At a moderate harvest rate of 20 tons per acre, one small 30 MW plant would burn approximately 20,000 acres of wood each year. This is not a sustainable use of our forests.

Wood burning biomass is not carbon neutral. It emits 1.5 times as much CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere as coal. It also releases numerous toxic chemicals, volatile organic compounds and high levels of particulate matter. The American Lung Association opposes wood burning biomass, stating that their emissions pose unacceptable health risks.

Healthy forests are necessary for our very survival. They provide us with the oxygen we breathe, carbon sequestration, habitat for plant and animal life, as well as lumber for furniture and houses. Healthy forests are necessary to filter and hold groundwater which replenishes our lakes and streams. Dead trees and debris which litter the forest floor provide food and habitat for insects, fungi, plants and animals, regenerate the soil and allow for future growth and for biodiversity.

Michigan forests are the lifeblood of our tourist economy. Our public forest land should be protected, not viewed as a commodity to be auctioned off to a furnace. Better alternatives exist. Use our tax dollar subsidies to promote wind, solar, and other energy sources which are carbon neutral and sustainable.

***Friends of the Jordan and the enclosed signatories respectfully request that you call for a moratorium on the use of subsidies to build biomass plants.***

Sincerely,