

June 14, 2016

Dear Chairman Cochran, Ranking Member Mikulski, Chairman Murkowski and Ranking Member Udall:

On behalf of our millions of members, we are writing to urge you to reject anti-environmental policy riders that threaten our air, land, water and wildlife on the Interior and Environment Appropriations bill. We are particularly concerned about language that would undermine efforts to address climate change by mandating policies that fail to account for the carbon pollution emitted by biomass power facilities. Such language has already been attached to the House companion bill, and would set a dangerous precedent for climate science by proposing fundamentally flawed carbon accounting.

Wood-burning power plants emit more carbon pollution than fossil-fueled plants for each unit of energy generated. This excess carbon pollution can persist in the atmosphere for decades, even accounting for any new trees that could replace those that are cut down – well beyond the time that we need to achieve emissions reductions to address climate change. Ignoring this pollution would undermine the carbon pollution reductions of the Clean Power Plan, and produce more unhealthy soot and smog pollution. It would also undermine our commitments under the Paris Climate Agreement, which are premised on achieving the full potential increase in our national forest carbon stocks.

Moreover, any policy rider would amount to legislative interference with what should be a science-based policy. Sixty-five scientists and researchers [wrote Congress earlier this year](#) to warn against attempting to settle scientific issues by legislative decree. The Washington Post and New York Times have editorialized against similar efforts to force agencies to treat biomass as carbon neutral no matter what the science says. The EPA's treatment of bioenergy continues to be informed by the agency's Scientific Advisory Board review of the carbon impacts of bioenergy. The agency has committed to assess the carbon pollution impacts of bioenergy. Any biomass rider would pre-empt that process and undermine the agency's authority.

Scientists, activists, and politicians around the world agree that we need to reduce carbon pollution as soon as possible to prevent catastrophic warming of our planet. Ignoring emissions from biomass power plants does nothing to stop the accumulation of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and could increase carbon pollution. We urge you not to include any anti-environmental riders in this year's appropriations bill that threaten our air, land, water and wildlife, including riders that would fail to account for the carbon pollution emitted by biomass power facilities.

Sincerely,

ActionAid USA  
Arise for Social Justice  
Battle Creek Alliance

Beyond Toxics  
Biofuelwatch  
California Chapparral Institute

California Communities Against Toxics  
Center for Biological Diversity  
Central Coast Forest Watch  
CLASS  
Clean Air Task Force  
Community Research  
Dogwood Alliance  
Ebbetts Pass Forest Watch  
Environment America  
Environmental Protection Information  
Center  
Florida Environmental Justice Network  
Florida League of Conservation Voters  
Food & Water Watch  
Friends of the Earth  
Glob Aalliance IA  
Green Delaware  
Greenpeace  
Indigenous Environmental Network  
Kentucky Heartwood  
Klamath Forest Alliance  
League of Conservation Voters  
Natural Resources Defense Council  
Neighbors Against The Burner  
Oregon Climate  
Oregon Wild  
Partnership for Policy Integrity  
Physicians for Social Responsibility  
PT AirWatchers  
Rachel Carson Council  
RESTORE: The North Woods  
Save Our Sky Blue Waters  
Sequoia ForestKeeper®  
Sierra Club  
Southern Environmental Law Center  
Southern Oregon Climate Action Now  
Springfield Climate Justice Coalition  
Stand  
Sustainable Energy & Economy Network  
SustainUS  
The Enviro Show  
Union of Concerned Scientists  
WildEarth Guardians