

To: Department of Energy Resources

From: Denise Andrews

Orange, MA and a Candidate for State Representative 2nd Franklin District

Subject: Biomass Public Comments

August 5, 2010

I am responding to your invitation to share written comments on the Biomass Sustainability and Carbon Policy Study (Manomet Study), Carbon Accounting and Biomass/RPS Policy Directions.

First, I appreciate the strategic leadership from Governor Patrick, his administration and the citizen's of the 2nd Franklin District to lead in sustainable and green technology and living. We must stay the course in leading and achieving our state-mandated goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions 80 percent by 2050.

I recently attended the public hearing held in Holyoke by the Department of Energy Resources (DOER) on the Biomass Sustainability and Carbon Policy Study (Manomet Study), Carbon Accounting and Biomass/RPS Policy Directions.

My objectives in attending were twofold:

First, to increase my knowledge on biomass, specifically, what are the desires and rationales of the citizens, what are the perspectives and findings of the technical community, and what is the health of public engagement, policy direction and collaborative future planning.

My second objective for attending is to be a fully engaged, collaborative, visible and an effective leader and citizen on this important issue.

The hearing was enlightening, educational and extremely beneficial. The summary presentation of the Manomet Study by the research team, an engaged DOER staff and the one hundred plus engaged citizens were essential in making the forum a success.

From my engagement in this session and over the last several months on Biomass, I have three conclusions that will shape my choices and leadership position:

First, large scale wood burning electrical generating plants, like the 47 megawatt plant proposed in Greenfield, are not good investments or direction for our communities.

There are two fundamental reasons for this conclusion, first, the scientific analysis and second, the desires and will of the people have been made clear. Scientific perspectives and data shared from the Manomet study team, area health care professionals, forestry professionals, and area researchers were consistent, compelling and conclusive. As for the will and desires of the people, Lennie Weeks, from Greenfield, shared beautifully at this forum that the people have spoken and that the will of the people must be respected and supported. The recent Greenfield Biomass vote (8:2 vote) was compelling and clear that the people do not believe the proposed biomass plant or current direction is best for their community.

My second conclusion is we, Western Mass, have an amazing and unique heart trust and brain trust that desires, is capable, and has a calling to improve our world and communities. Individuals attending and sharing comments represented forestry, health care, energy, environment, policy, community organizing, education, land owners, neighbors, government and scientists. In the details and passion shared in the many public comments, it is clear that there are solutions and ideas that can be invested in and brought to life that will meet or perhaps exceed the state-mandated goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions 80 percent by 2050. A goal everyone would like to meet. Some ideas shared in the session that together can be further explored were to utilize small scale biomass for heating or co-generation, to explore pyrolysis methods, and to investigate algae and switch grass fuel stocks. The collective community clearly has the ability to generate solutions and to lead as model communities for green technology and sustainable living. Our challenge is will we and how can we.

My third conclusion is our current processes that are attempting to address how we wisely introduce effective alternative energy sources are well intended, valuable, are under leveraged and are inadequate. One example is at the public hearing individuals are limited to two minutes to share their position and ideas when in some cases an hour sharing maybe too short. We can and must improve our collective engagement and joint complex problem solving processes. One idea is to for government to reapply proven effective and efficient process from both for-profit, non- profit sectors that utilize technology, diversity, global and local ideas, global and local proven methodologies to both create solutions and build collaborative movements to achieve desired results on complex challenges.

Bottom line we must increase our capability and urgency to bring on line effective alternative energy sources that reduce carbon emissions and accelerate our needed actions to address threats to our future, specifically global warming, and our oil consumption and dependency and the resulting catastrophic outcomes from this (i.e. environmental harm, wars).

Your leadership to address each area outlined above is needed and appreciated.

Western Mass has some unique capability to solve these challenges and I would suggest revisiting how this heart and brain trust can be fully leveraged.

We must lead in sustainable living.

I want to encourage bolder leadership on engagement and collaborative complex problem solving and solution execution. I am happy to meet and/or co-host sessions that can address the above identified opportunities.

Thank you for dreaming, being responsible and working diligently in leading our commonwealth in sustainable green living.

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