



Buckeye Forest Council  
*Protecting Ohio's native forests and their  
inhabitants.*

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### Large Scale Biomass Proposal Has Gone Up in Smoke

First Energy's announcement today to cancel plans to convert the Burger Facility to use woody biomass came as no surprise to environmental groups who have questioned the economic and environmental viability of First Energy's plans for several years now. Despite all the incentives thrown at First Energy to re-power the Burger Facility, from Ohio's Renewable Energy Credits (REC's), a possible "false" or "super" REC multiplier, and federal incentives to transport chipped trees from as far away as Florida, in the end it didn't make economic sense to cut and burn trees to generate electricity.

"The market spoke today," said Jen Miller of the Sierra Club Ohio Chapter, "Even with boatloads of government incentives, biomass couldn't financially compete with energy efficiency, wind, or solar. This project was a bad idea for the environment, for First Energy's customers, and for the future of renewable energy in Ohio."

The Burger Biomass Plant, which would have generated only a small fraction of Ohio's power supply, would have burned through 3 million tons of cut trees each year, requiring approximately 66,000 acres of forest clearing annually.

"We hope that First Energy will invest in truly renewable forms of energy generation, such as wind and solar, along with energy efficiency to meet its renewable energy requirements," said Cheryl Johncox of Buckeye Forest Council. "We also hope that First Energy will continue to invest in employment options in Shadyside, Ohio when undertaking these efforts."

The Sierra Club Ohio Chapter, Buckeye Forest Council and other environmental and conservation organizations have continued to express concerns about the rush to burn trees as a means to generate electricity. Ohio still has nine utility-scale proposals to burn biomass for as much as 2100 MW of energy generation, which will have a significant impact on Ohio's environment, human health, and traditional forest product industries.

"Investments in energy efficiency and truly renewable energy production such as wind and solar provide the best 'bang for the buck' when it comes to reducing pollutants which have a huge impact on the health of Ohio citizens," said Johncox. "Any type of combustion for energy generation releases soot or particulates, toxic metals like mercury, other hazardous air pollutants, and greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide; biomass is no exception."

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