



Resolution Opposing the Palmer/Springfield Biomass Power Plant

Council Sponsors: Councilors Darcy DuMont and Dorothy Pam

Community Sponsor: League of Women Voters of Amherst

Whereas, rising levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide have created a global climate emergency; and

Whereas, wood-fired power plants emit more carbon dioxide per kilowatt hour of electricity generation than coal; and

Whereas, more than 60 years are necessary to regenerate a forest to the prior level of carbon dioxide sequestration; and

Whereas, wood-fired power plants emit far more respirable particulates than coal, causing serious health hazards; and

Whereas, particulate and gaseous pollution from the planned Palmer/Springfield power plant would increase hazardous pollution throughout the Pioneer Valley; and

Whereas, the planned Palmer/Springfield woody biomass power plant would be sited in a low-income area of Springfield, exacerbating an already serious environmental justice situation; and

Whereas, the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (DOER) Renewable Portfolio Standards are poised to define wood-burning power plants as “non-carbon emitting”, allowing the millions of dollars in rebates that would make the Palmer/Springfield power plant profitable.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Amherst Town Council strongly opposes the Palmer/Springfield Renewable Energy wood-burning power plant because of the irreparable harm it would cause to the environment and human health.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Amherst Town Council protests the use of state subsidies or other incentives to support large-scale woody biomass power plants.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Amherst Town Council calls on Gov. Baker, the Legislature's Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy Committee, and the DOER to reject the inaccurate definition of large-scale woody biomass burning as “carbon neutral” and to strike any inclusion of woody biomass from the update to the Renewable Energy Portfolio Standards.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Amherst Town Council urges our State Legislators to pass legislation rapidly in 2021 that will permanently ban large-scale woody biomass power plants in the Commonwealth and any state subsidies for such use.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Clerk of the Amherst Town Council shall cause a copy of this Resolution to be sent to Governor Charlie Baker, the Department of Energy Resources, the members of the Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy Committee of the General Court, State Senator Josephine Comerford, and State Representative Mindy Domb.

Voted this ____ day of February, 2021.

Lynn Griesemer,
Town Council President