

MEDIA RELEASE

Actions Speak Louder Than Words ChipBusters 18 June 2010

Kevin Rudd Will Let Forests Burn for 'Green' Electricity

Anti-woodchip group ChipBusters today said that Kevin Rudd has given the woodchip industry the green light to burn native forests for electricity. ChipBusters say the Rudd Government will give woodchippers huge subsidies that will knock out competition from genuine renewable power plants such as wind and solar in NSW, Victoria, Tasmania and Western Australia.

"This is not clean, green or renewable," said Noel Plumb of ChipBusters.

"Kevin Rudd is refusing to remove a giant loophole in the Renewable Energy regulations 1 which will let the woodchip industry get taxpayer Renewable Energy Certificates (RECS) for burning woodchips from native forests to produce electricity. The legislation comes before the Senate again next Monday for changes but the Government still refuses to remove the woodchip loophole."

"The woodchip industry will at least double its revenue from electricity through the RECS which it can sell to so called 'dirty' coal fired power stations to make them 'greener'. The only problem is that burning native forests for electricity creates at least 4 to 6 times more CO2 emissions than a coal fired power station." 2

"The carbon 'balance' through regrowth of the forest cannot be restored for several hundred years at least, assuming that the forest is not woodchipped again and again every 20 to 40 years. Of course values like wildlife, clean water to towns and farms, fishing and oyster industries, tourism and the sheer beauty of the forests will be destroyed also."

"Kevin Rudd must remove this loophole and act positively to protect our forests if he is to keep faith with his promise to all Australians that he would take real action to combat climate change."

"Recent industry statements (including ABC 2 Sydney 7.30 Report 16 March 2010) clearly reveal the industry agenda - they will woodchip and burn our forests for electricity with huge subsidies courtesy of the Rudd Government or they will export our forests as woodchips to be burnt or pulped in Asia and Europe."

"The woodchip industry has plans for forest woodchip fired, NOT plantation, power stations in at least 4 states - NSW, Victoria, Tasmania and Western Australia. It is just another industry lie in 40 years of woodchip lies that these will burn only waste from woodchip plants, plants that were supposed to only take waste from sawlog operations yet now chip an average of 80% of all trees felled in the forests."

An overwhelming majority of Australians across all states have called for an end to native forest logging, according to the results of a recent national poll.3

The poll found that 8 out of 10 Australians supported an end to the native forest industry, which has provided Asian markets with at least 70 million tonnes of woodchips over the last 10 years under Regional Forest Agreements between the Federal and State Governments.

"We believe the poll also reflects public anger about the proposals by the woodchip industry to burn forests for electricity with the support of the Rudd Government and State Governments. The most common response we receive when telling the public of this new threat is "How stupid is that?""

"With its overseas woodchip buyers for paper pulp now increasingly sourcing woodchips from plantations the native forest logging industry is desperate. The plan to burn forests for electricity is a complete betrayal of most Australian's desire to protect our great remaining forests," Mr Plumb concluded.

For further information and comment: -
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- 1.. Renewable Energy (Electricity) Regulations 2001 and Renewable Energy (Electricity) Act 2000 - see attached extracts
- 2.. Calculations available
- 3.. Galaxy Poll – Weblink

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/06/14/2926191.htm>

Noel is a former Convenor of the South East Forest Alliance and former Executive Officer of the National Parks Association of NSW. He has served terms on the National Council of the Australian Conservation Foundation and the Executive Committee of the NSW Nature Conservation Council.

He was the Joint Conservation Negotiator for both the Eden and the South Coast/Tumut Regional Forest Assessments (NOT Regional Forest Agreements) in 1998 and 2000 that saw more than half a million hectares of forests added to NSW National Parks. He also led a 3 year campaign that saw the controversial NSW Charcoal Plant proposal finally defeated in 2003 after 3 bitter community campaigns in western NSW and the South Coast opposed to its pollution and the burning of native forests for silicon smelting.

Noel has started ChipBusters to lead a new campaign to protect native forests against the threats of climate change and a resurgent woodchipping industry that is trying to have forests approved in every state as a clean green energy source for generating electricity, thus opening up a major new market for the woodchip companies and their political supporters including the giant Construction Forestry Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU).

This 'bastard of an industry' has the ear of both major parties and is supported by one of the most powerful unions in the country, the CFMEU

RENEWABLE ENERGY (ELECTRICITY) ACT 2000 - SECT 17

What is an eligible renewable energy source?

(1) The following energy sources are eligible renewable energy sources :

(a) hydro;

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- (b) wave;
 - (c) tide;
 - (d) ocean;
 - (e) wind;
 - (f) solar;
 - (g) geothermal-aquifer;
 - (h) hot dry rock;
 - (i) energy crops;
 - (j) wood waste;
 - (k) agricultural waste;
 - (l) waste from processing of agricultural products;
 - (m) food waste;
 - (n) food processing waste;
 - (o) bagasse;
 - (p) black liquor;
 - (q) biomass-based components of municipal solid waste;
 - (r) landfill gas;
 - (s) sewage gas and biomass-based components of sewage;
 - (t) any other energy source prescribed by the regulations.

(2) Despite subsection (1), the following energy sources are not eligible renewable energy sources:

- (a) fossil fuels;
- (b) materials or waste products derived from fossil fuels.

Regulations

(3) For the purposes of this Act, the regulations may provide that an energy source referred to in subsection (1) or (2) has the meaning prescribed by the regulations.

(4) For the purposes of this Act, the regulations may make provision for and in relation to limiting the meaning of an energy source referred to in subsection (1).

(5) For the purposes of this Act, the regulations may make provision for and in relation to extending the meaning of an energy source referred to in subsection (2).

RENEWABLE ENERGY (ELECTRICITY) REGULATIONS 2001 - REG 8

Meaning of wood waste

(1) For section 17 of the Act, wood waste means:

(a) biomass:

(i) produced from non-native environmental weed species;
and

(ii) harvested for the control or eradication of the species, from a harvesting operation that is approved under relevant Commonwealth, State or Territory planning and approval processes; and

(b) a manufactured wood product or a by-product from a manufacturing process; and

(c) waste products from the construction of buildings or furniture, including timber off-cuts and timber from demolished buildings; and

(d) sawmill residue; and

(e) biomass from a native forest that meets all of the requirements in subregulation (2).

Examples for paragraph (b)

Packing case, pallet, recycled timber, engineered wood product (including one manufactured by binding wood strands, wood particles, wood fibres or wood veneers with adhesives to form a composite).

(2) Biomass from a native forest must be:

(a) harvested primarily for a purpose other than biomass for energy production; and

(b) either:

(i) a by-product or waste product of a harvesting operation, approved under relevant Commonwealth, State or Territory planning and approval processes, for which a high-value process is the primary purpose of the harvesting; or

(ii) a by-product (including thinnings and coppicing) of a harvesting operation that is carried out in accordance with ecologically sustainable forest management principles; and

(c) either:

(i) if it is from an area where a regional forest agreement is in force -- produced in accordance with any ecologically sustainable forest management principles required by the agreement; or

(ii) if it is from an area where no regional forest agreement is in force -- produced from harvesting that is carried out in accordance with ecologically sustainable forest management principles that the Minister is satisfied are consistent with those required by a regional forest agreement.

(3) For subparagraph (2) (b) (i), the primary purpose of a harvesting operation is taken to be a high-value process only if the total financial value of the products of the high value process is higher than the financial value of other products of the harvesting operation.

(4) In this regulation:

ecologically sustainable forest management principles means the following principles that meet the requirements of ecologically sustainable development for forests:

(a) maintenance of the ecological processes within forests, including the formation of soil, energy flows, and the carbon, nutrient and water cycles;

(b) maintenance of the biological diversity of forests;

(c) optimisation of the benefits to the community from all uses of forests within ecological constraints.

"high-value process" means the production of sawlogs, veneer, poles, piles, girders, wood for carpentry or craft uses, or oil products.