

MEDIA RELEASE: "Eden Dead Koala Power = Biomassacre"

20th April 2010,

CHIPSTOP, CHIPBUSTERS, SERCA

Conservation groups today called on the Keneally Government to immediately reject a proposal for a Wood Fired Power Station at the infamous Eden Woodchip Mill.

"Consideration of this proposal by the ALP Government breaks its promise given under Bob Carr that native forests would never be used for power generation", claimed Noel Plumb of anti-woodchip group ChipBusters. " This promise was given after public outrage at such proposals."

"The woodchip industry is seeking to create a massive new market for woodchips through burning the forests for electricity production, on top of export woodchips for paper production. It is known to the electricity industry as 'dead koala power' and leading industry players are shy of it, the public won't buy it."

"It is a disgraceful proposal that will ensure not only the extinction of the last koala colony in the South East Forests, in Mumbulla State Forest, but also lead to the extinction of other endangered wildlife in the forests, including owls, bats, parrots, gliders and potaroos."

"This destructive opportunity only exists because the Eden Woodchip Mill already grinds out a million tonnes of woodchips a year," said Harriet Swift of local forest conservation group CHIPSTOP. "The industry describes woodchips as waste wood from logging operations but it's a sham. An average of 90% of all trees felled in South East NSW and East Gippsland VIC forests go straight to the chipmill."

"We are facing approval by the Government to this monstrous proposal in less than 3 weeks. The Planning Minister has called it a state significant infrastructure development and is set to approve it under the infamous Part 3A powers that effectively override the Environment Planning and Assessment Act."

"The people of NSW also roundly rejected a very similar proposal under Bob Carr to burn forests as charcoal for silicon production. Has this ALP Government learnt nothing? Does it value nothing except development, no matter the real social, economic and environmental costs?"

"Australians have the common sense to know that this is a dirty deal – "dead koala power", said Prue Acton OBE of the South East Regional Conservation Alliance. "The proposed power station is not clean, it is not green and it is not going to happen."

"Conservationists have been battling to save the last koala colony in the South East Forests from woodchipping for paper pulp. The Eden Chipmill Power Station must not be allowed to kill off the koalas or any other forest animals. Its time to call a halt to all woodchipping of our forests."

"The NSW Government seems actually to want another running brawl on such a losing issue, all the way to the next election. It will certainly get a brawl if Premier Keneally does not step in to put a quick stop to this menace and, in so doing, restore some confidence in its environmental promises."

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SUMMARY

What's wrong with the Biomass Proposal for Eden?

Australia's many pending organic waste biomass proposals are queued up behind the Eden Woodchip Biomass proposal. To pass this one sets a precedent to allow the next 20 through.

The reasons that biomass from native forest timber won't work are:

- Chipper can't use bark and crowns of trees. It never uses waste. It uses whole logs from native forests. They are cheapest to harvest.
- Native forest is not therefore waste. Woodchips are not made from waste. They are made from whole logs.
- Particulate pollution up and down the coast
- 35 metre stack
- Forests are not renewable unless they are regrown
- Real renewable power would come from other sources such as wind power, gas biomass and solar arrays.
- Forests are only carbon stores and only protect air and water purity while they grow.

There are 20 biomass proposals in the approval pipeline.

The Eden green biomassacre is therefore a bad precedent. The green light for one is a green light for all. Worse, the community only has til April 22 to respond to the EA for the Eden proposal ... less than a month, while the email address for submissions bounces.

References

http://christine-milne.greensmps.org.au/webfm_send/163 [PDF]
Biomass energy and the Mandatory Renewable Energy Target.
Briefing paper for. Senator Christine Milne.
Prepared by. Dr Jane Grows. July 2009