

MEDIA RELEASE: NSW OPENS DOOR FOR REPLACING WOODCHIPS WITH ENERGY INDUSTRY. HARRIETT SWIFT. CHIPSTOP. 14 July 2013

Any tree that is currently woodchipped could be burned for electricity generation under a new law foreshadowed last week by the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA).

“This could remove the last regulatory obstacle to replacing the native forest woodchipping industry with an energy industry,” according to convenor of the Chipstop campaign, Harriett Swift. “It could see some 95% of timber cut on the Far South Coast burned for electricity generation and has the potential to revive dormant plans for a wood fired power station at the Eden chipmill,” Ms Swift said.

According to the head of the EPA, Mr Barry Buffier, “Under these changes... tree heads and off cuts of trees cut for sawlogs or trees that might otherwise be made into pulp, can be burnt for electricity generation.”

<http://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/epamedia/EPAMedia13071101.htm>

“This means it will be possible to burn whole trees and the industrial scale destruction and burning that the new Regulation would permit could change the economics of the technology.”

“However, for the time being native forest wood remains ineligible for Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs), but the industry is lobbying hard to have this ban overturned as well.”

“Without the subsidies that flows from being classified as ‘renewable energy’, there is still a big question mark over the viability of this destructive and polluting technology,” she said.

Ms Swift rejected assurances from Mr Buffier that: “The proposed changes have not been designed to increase the intensity of harvesting.”

“In the Eden Region we already have the most intensive logging (virtual clear felling) in the State and that is unlikely to change.”

Ms Swift said that public has been invited to comment on the decision which will become law after 28 days unless the public can convince the Government to change its mind.

An on-line petition has been set up to help members of the public pass on their views to the State Government at: <http://www.change.org/en-AU/petitions/nsw-premier-and-ministers-please-retain-the-present-ban-on-burning-native-forests-for-electricity>

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SAY NO TO WOODCHIP POWER. Sign the on-line petition at <http://www.change.org/petitions/nsw-premier-and-ministers-please-retain-the-present-ban-on-burning-native-forests-for-electricity>