

To the Scottish Government,

Moratorium on the construction of large biomass power plants in Scotland

We are writing an open letter to the Scottish Government calling for a moratorium on the development of all large biomass power plants in Scotland, such as those currently proposed by Forth Energy.

All biomass plants start life with a 'carbon debt.' This is because carbon is released when the woody crops that fuel them are chopped down and burnt as fuel. It takes many years for the trees to regrow and re-absorb the carbon released during this process. It therefore takes many years for a new biomass plant to 'pay off' its carbon debt. New research implies that for large projects, this carbon debt can take years to pay off. Several decades in fact.

It is the Scottish Government who must decide on whether to give these plants permission to operate. But we are not convinced that Forth Energy have proven that their proposals will deliver genuine carbon savings in the timescale that is demanded, both by the science of climate change, and Scottish climate change legislation.

This decision is important. If approved, these plants will attract hundreds of millions of pounds in public subsidies. But if the Forth Energy plants will only deliver carbon savings many decades into the future, we believe that every tax payer in Scotland should be asking questions about whether their proposals provide value for money. Surely that subsidy would be better spent on projects that will deliver carbon savings next year, not next century?

Only genuinely independent research can provide a true picture of the carbon emissions associated with the Forth Energy proposals. Until we have that information, we believe a moratorium must be put on the development of all large scale biomass plants in Scotland.

Yours Sincerely,

Greener Leith
Friends of the Earth Scotland
Malcolm Chisholm MSP
Robin Harper MSP
Shirley-Anne Somerville MSP
Sheila Gilmore MP
Mark Lazarowicz MP
Cllr Gordon Munro
Cllr Rob Munn (Deputy Lord Provost)
Cllr Maggie Chapman
Ronald Reid (Secretary, Leith Central Community Council)
Jim Scanlon (Chair, Leith Links Community Council)
Leith Links Residents Association
Tower Wharf Residents Association
Friends of the Water of Leith Basin