



January 18, 2021

To: Amherst Town Council

From: Amherst LWV Sustainability and Climate Action Committee (SACAC)

Subject: Resolution Regarding Palmer/Springfield Biomass Plant

The proposed Palmer Renewable Energy wood-burning power plant has been controversial for a decade. Yet, despite the many legitimate objections, the plant was permitted and is now close to receiving the renewable energy credits that will enable the developer to make this plant profitable. The Baker Administration has pushed to relax the DOER's Renewable Energy Portfolio Standards, so that burning woody biomass would be defined as "carbon-neutral", despite the strong scientific evidence to the contrary. (Appended page)

Wood-fired power plants emit more carbon dioxide per kilowatt hour (kwh) of electric power generated than coal. Additionally, wood-fired plants emit far more particulates than coal, leading to severe pollution by fine particles. The Pioneer Valley already has serious air pollution; Springfield is known as the "asthma capital" of the U.S. Thus, the proposed plant would have significant negative consequences for our local area. Moreover, the proposed power plant would be sited in a low-income area in Springfield, exacerbating the already serious environmental justice concerns.

The Springfield City Council recently passed a resolution condemning the biomass subsidies and emphasizing the impact of the plant on their community.

This resolution is in accordance with the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Goals.

We urge the Amherst Town Council to join with Springfield and pass a resolution protesting the use of state subsidies for energy generation from woody biomass and the impacts a wood-burning power plant would have on the health and socioeconomic well-being of Pioneer Valley residents.

*The League of Women Voters of Amherst is a non-partisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. The League supports preservation of the physical, chemical, and biological integrity of the ecosystem, with maximum protection of public health, air quality, and the environment. The League is committed to racial justice at the local, state, and national level.*