

BLUE RIDGE ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE LEAGUE

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CAMPAIGN TO CHANGE ENERGY POLICY IN THE SOUTHEAST BIOMASS IS A FALSE SOLUTION

Today at a press conference the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League launched a campaign to halt biomass energy incinerators in the Southeast. Based on its new report on biomass energy, *Smoke and Mirrors*, the League will press for local, state and national policy changes to reduce global warming. The message is: Biomass is a False Solution.

In a comprehensive analysis of energy production facilities using organic materials known as biomass, *Smoke and Mirrors* concludes that 1) Global warming is a planetary crisis which demands concerted, substantial action; and 2) Biomass fuel is not carbon neutral.

The report's principal author, Louis Zeller, the League's Science Director, said, "Global warming is already harming communities in the Southeast." Carbon dioxide—regardless of whether it is released from fossil fuel or biomass—remains in the air for centuries. Zeller added, "We can't afford to wait a thousand years."* He said that a better understanding of biomass will force systematic comparisons with other fuels and drive public policy towards truly clean, renewable energy.

League staff and volunteers will hit the road in a multi-state informational campaign to debunk biomass and stop waste incineration. In early spring, the League and its more than fifty chapters in the Southeast will host Ban the Burn, an anti-biomass road show. They plan to make presentations to local governments, state commissions, civic organizations and editorial boards.

Smoke and Mirrors features case studies of a variety of biomass energy facilities

* See *Smoke and Mirrors* page 29 for information on long-term carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere.

such as Fibrowatt's poultry manure-powered plants proposed for Virginia, North Carolina and Georgia and Wiregrass Energy's proposed sewage sludge- and wood-fired power plant in Valdosta, Georgia.

William H. Frederick, Sr. is a teacher who lives in Sampson County about 2 miles from a proposed biomass energy plant. He said, "Biomass is a false solution in solving energy problems and is not clean energy." Having taught biology and environmental science for 34 years, he sees evidence of global warming. As a member of Sampson County Concerned Citizens for a Safe Environment, he added, "I am also a community leader who believes in environmental justice."

Karen R. Noll is the Co-founder and Community Outreach Coordinator of Wiregrass Activists for Clean Energy, a citizens' group in Lowndes County, Georgia. The group opposes a 40 megawatt biomass incinerator which would emit more than 1000 tons a year of air pollutants and consume 800,000 gallons of water each day. She said, "Because of the health care costs of reduced air quality, the unsafe air emissions in the vicinity of schools, the vast amount of water squandered, the unsustainable nature of the fuel source, and the huge tax burden of this energy source, we oppose the proposed biomass incinerator near Valdosta, Georgia."

Dr. William Blackley, a physician who has helped stop several poultry manure power plants, said, "Emissions, like those from burning biomass, have been proven to increase health risks for all humans. These toxic emissions predominantly affect children, athletes, older people and those with chronic illness." He added, "There are clear alternatives for creating electricity that don't increase toxic emissions and public health risks."

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The 61-page report, *Smoke and Mirrors*, and today's press conference presentation are available to download for free from the League's website at <http://www.BREDL.org> and in hard copy for \$20.00 from Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League PO Box 88 Glendale Springs, NC 29629.