

# **Mohawk Area Public Health Coalition**

## **Sharing resources and responding to public health threats and emergencies.**

January 4, 2010

John Auerbach, Commissioner  
MA Department of Public Health  
250 Washington Street, Boston, MA 02108-4619

Suzanne K. Condon, Associate Commissioner  
Director of the Bureau of Environmental Health  
MA Department of Public Health  
250 Washington Street, Boston, MA 02108-4619

Laurie Burt, Commissioner  
MA Department of Environmental Protection  
One Winter Street, Boston, MA 02108

Dear Commissioners Auerbach and Burt, and Associate Commissioner/Director Condon:

At our regularly scheduled annual meeting held on 1/4/2010, MAPHCO members voted to express our concerns to both the DPH and the DEP about the potential for public health impacts from the degraded air quality associated with the large-scale biomass incinerators proposed for Western Mass. As a regional coalition of Boards of Health, we are writing to ask that a complete examination be conducted of the cumulative health impacts of these proposed incinerators, since no impact analysis has been required under the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA). MEPA review is the appropriate stage to disclose cumulative impacts, yet these projects were issued waivers and were not required to address obvious impacts to regional air quality and public health.

We are seconding the request of the Franklin Regional Planning Board that a full Environmental Impact Report (EIR) must be prepared to disclose the impacts from the Pioneer Renewable Energy Biomass Incinerator proposed for Greenfield, MA. We would also like to join with the American Lung Association in Massachusetts and the Massachusetts Medical Society who have expressed that these proposed biomass incinerators represent an unacceptable public health risk due to the release of pollutants and further degradation of our already impacted regional air quality.

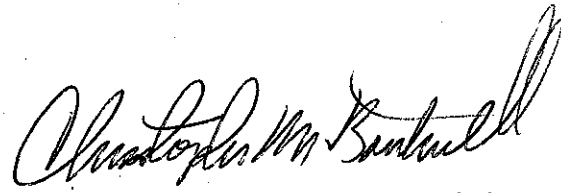
In addition, MAPHCO has concerns about the proposed use of sewage effluent for wet-cooling the Greenfield biomass incinerator. A Health Impact Analysis (HIA) should be done to evaluate the environmental fate of the contaminants that could be released into the human environment from the unregulated discharge of materials dissolved in the

sewage effluent. We believe that the Massachusetts Public Health Council needs to hold hearings on the re-use of sewage effluent for cooling tower make-up water and that existing DEP regulations are not adequate to protect the public from exposure to contaminants such as active pharmaceutical ingredients, personal care products, endocrine disrupting chemicals, hormone mimicking compounds, and other emerging contaminants.

Please reply to this letter to let us know how the DPH and DEP will be responding to our requests.

Sincerely,

  
William Elliott, Co-Chair

  
Christopher M. Boutwell, Co-Chair



Host Agency: FRCOG, 425 Main St. Suite 20, Greenfield MA 01301-3313 [www.frcog.org](http://www.frcog.org)

MAPHCO Member Towns:

Ashfield, Buckland, Bernardston, Charlemont, Colrain, Conway, Deerfield, Erving, Gill, Goshen, Greenfield, Hawley, Heath, Leverett, Leyden, Monroe, Montague, Northfield, Rowe, Shelburne, Shutesbury, Sunderland, Warwick, Whately, Williamsburg, and Wendell.