

A comment from a VT Woodlands certified tree farm, an electric landscaper/tree contractor, and a renewal energy advocate:

I only support biomass burning if it is used as a backup source of electricity for peak periods or for when renewable sources are not sufficient. We need to expand rooftop solar in Chittenden county via regulations for new construction, parking lot solar, industrial rooftop solar, and more incentives for old buildings. The McNeil plant only hinders the growth of renewable energy.

Biomass extraction is hurting our forests. It creates incentives for loggers to do whole-tree removal, which causes more timber stand damage. It also leaves an insufficient amount of woody debris to prevent deer browsing, and thus it reduces fast forest regeneration. The machines used to do biomass are hurtful to soil & water quality in comparison to careful saw log-only extraction.

While many think biomass comes from the waste products from tree workers, I believe that a large percentage of it is a product that is extracted from forests just for its value during logging. Therefore, by promoting McNeil, you are burning extra gas or diesel in the chainsaws, skidders, and during trucking. If you make McNeil a backup generator, then more of that woody material can be left in the forest, or can be turned into soil at compost centers.

Thank you,
Andrew Rianhard
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