

I should state that I do work for a company that would possibly have a stake in everything I'm about to say. We're trying to reduce our stake in that, but it doesn't excuse that I do probably bring some bias into the conversation.

I do not support nor oppose this. I think that moving toward a more sustainable, renewable, and cleaner future is important. Vermont tends to lead these things, and a fair amount of the US eventually follows suit, so I understand that Vermont thinks this is important. My biggest concern is the politicization of the conversation. Plenty of people wield the terms "science" and "logic" to support their own beliefs rather than the facts. I struggle to find scholarly articles around the subjects mentioned, and yet everyone seems to think there is a mountain of modern evidence of things that I can't find as I pour through scientific and environmental journals. I can find a lot of Op-ed pieces written by politicians and journalists, but the scientists are nowhere to be seen around arguments for nor against biofuels, as many members of the public have said.

I only ask that the PUC investigate the actual science behind measures put forth in the group. Many are saying that "modern science" doesn't support carbon neutrality of wood and biofuel. I've not been able to find many peer-reviewed scientific articles in reputable journals to support their claims about "modern science."

This same modern science simply looks at things in a vacuum. I'm sure when you account for transportation and external activities, biofuels are no longer 100% carbon neutral. I believe (unscientifically, mind you) that people are denying the fact that all trees die. This death results in 1 of 3 ultimate outcomes.

1. It can die without any intervention, and proceed to fall, and decay, thus producing carbon as part of the decomposition process.
2. It can be burned through prescriptive burning or forest fires, which would also release that carbon into the atmosphere
3. It can be harvested and burned, or converted into something that will be burned, which also produces carbon.

The only other option to truly sequester the carbon in that tree is to bury it, which I don't think anyone has any intention of doing. We should be using the resources we have in a manner that best suits our goals, and I think logging can be a part of that so long as it's done reasonably, and responsibly. We won't get more carbon out than we put in, and we can't put in more carbon than we get out. In the end, I think biomass should have a place in modern energy, but that doesn't need to be the only fuel at our disposal.

I don't pretend to know about the health effects on burning different fuels in our homes. That can likely be determined down the road when looking at general healthcare outcomes. It'll come, but not soon enough to be useful.

I'd also like the PUC to show some teeth to ensure that these rules, if enacted, are followed. Unless we have systems in place to ensure compliance, this is simply a tax on doing the right thing.

Thank you,

Drew Clayson