



Policy Resource Pack

S. 4153 (118th): Forest Biomass Emissions
Act of 2024

NaturAlly

Objective:

Demonstrate support for the Forest Biomass Emissions Act of 2024 to better analyze the impact of forest biomass combustion on environmental health and affected communities.

A. Context for Forest Biomass Combustion

[Forest biomass](#) is any part of a tree, like the bark, branches, and roots, which can be used to yield energy. The biomass is first converted to wood pellets to be employed for combustion. Burning forest biomass is an increasingly popular energy production method that is marketed as the clean alternative to the burning of fossil fuels. Using forest biomass for fuel is often considered carbon neutral, as the carbon emitted into the atmosphere from burning the wood is balanced by the carbon absorbed by trees during regrowth. Trees are theoretically renewable: the emissions released by the burning of forest biomass will eventually be counteracted by the carbon sequestered by regrown trees. In actuality, obtaining carbon neutrality via the regrowth of forests can take about [44 to 104 years](#), which is substantially more than the United Nations' goal of reaching carbon neutrality within 25 years.

While not particularly dominant in the energy sector yet, the biomass industry has a growing presence in the US, bolstered by the [\\$10 million grant](#) from the US Forest Service to burn biomass as a supposedly clean energy source. However, compared to conventional fossil fuel resources, biomass facilities produce 2.8 times the amount of pollution. In addition, for each unit of electricity generated, the burning of biomass releases [more emissions](#) than the burning of coal. It is becoming increasingly evident that although forest biomass combustion has been promoted as a clean alternative energy source, it is at least as harmful to the environment as fossil fuels.

The burning of forest biomass releases several [compounds](#) that are detrimental to the health of those in its proximity. The Environmental Protection Agency explains that these compounds are carcinogens and can lead to other medical complications. Regardless of the source of the wood biomass, whether it is from clean forests or factory remains, the resulting pollution is equally damaging. These compounds include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Particulate matter
- Nitrogen oxides
- Carbon monoxide
- Hazardous air pollutants (HAPs)
- Lead
- Mercury

The combustion of forest biomass poses major concerns for environmental equity. Approximately [14 million](#) Americans live close to energy facilities using biomass. Their proximity means they are constantly inhaling the toxic pollutants released by wood pellet production and biomass combustion. Marginalized communities are burdened with this risk, as the wood pellet industry is [two times more likely](#) to install plants and factories in underprivileged localities, which often consist of people of color, compared to affluent regions. Given that these communities lack significant influence in both the political and socioeconomic spheres, it is difficult to prevent the establishment of such facilities. This problem is exacerbated as underprivileged communities are typically already subjected to preexisting environmental hazards including industrial and power plants.

The reality is that the combustion of forest biomass increases environmental damage and further jeopardizes environmental health in disadvantaged neighborhoods, disproportionately affecting people of color. Therefore, it is crucial that we efficiently collect scientific evidence regarding lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions from biomass combustion. Incorporating this data into the development of regulatory practices will help maintain environmental health and social equity. The Forest Biomass Emissions Act of 2024 will allow us to more accurately assess the impacts of forest biomass combustion on the environment and affected communities to credibly make informed decisions regarding its management and regulation.

B. Forest Biomass Emissions Act of 2024 Fact Sheet

- **Title:** Forest Biomass Emissions Act of 2024
- **Primary Sponsor:** Senator Cory Booker [D–NJ]
- **Date Introduced:** Apr 17, 2024
- **Track Bill:** www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/118/s4153

The Forest Biomass Emissions Act of 2024 aims to promote the comprehensive collection of data regarding the effects of forest biomass combustion, particularly lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions. This will allow for more informed policies regarding this alternative energy source to protect the health of the environment and communities. Information from key subsections of the bill is presented below.

Section 3: Lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions assessment

A. IN GENERAL

- a. The Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency will evaluate the lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions generated by the production of electricity yielded from the combustion of forest biomass.
- b. The assessment of lifecycle emissions will be incorporated into the creation of regulatory practices for biomass combustion.

B. REQUIREMENT

- a. The assessment of lifecycle emissions must be comprehensive, including all potential impacts of the entire electricity production process.

Section 4: Evaluating other impacts of the forest biomass industry

A. STUDY

- a. The study of emissions from forest biomass combustion will involve dust, noise, and air pollution that are produced on the premises of wood pellet mills and facilities associated with biomass processing and combustion.
- b. The study will also consider effects on the environment and community before the forest biomass reaches a wood pellet or electricity production facility. This includes processes like deforestation to acquire biomass and the transportation of biomass to the aforementioned facilities.

- c. Data on a) air quality measurements, b) racial and socioeconomic composition, and c) regulatory compliance in biomass processing sites and affected communities will be collected.

B. REPORT

- a. Within 60 days of the study, the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency will submit findings of the study to a) the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the Senate, b) the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives, and c) the Science Advisory Board to guide forest biomass research and regulations.

C. Advertising Materials

Instructions: Use the following sample social media posts to spread awareness about the impact of forest biomass combustion on environmental and community wellbeing by supporting the Forest Biomass Emissions Act of 2024.

Sample #1:

Using forest biomass as fuel releases 2.8 times as much pollution as fossil fuels. Support the Forest Biomass Emissions Act of 2024 to ensure a more eco-friendly future through thorough investigation! #ProtectForests

Sample #2:

Comprehensively assessing the effect of forest biomass combustion on the health of the environment and the wellbeing of communities is critical. Let's join the mission to ensure equitable and green energy production. #ForestBiomassAct

Sample #3:

Support the Forest Biomass Emissions Act of 2024 today to evaluate greenhouse gas emissions from biomass combustion and promote sustainable energy! #ActNow #CleanEnergy

The following page consists of sample social media graphics to accompany written social media posts to increase awareness about emissions from the combustion of biomass.

Sample Social Media Graphics:



D. Communications Kit

Template #1: Demonstrating Legislative Support – Email Template to Congressional Officials

Instructions: Use the following email template to communicate with your local representatives about supporting the bill. See Section E (Important Resources) on finding contact information for your local congressional officials. Fill in information in the brackets [].

Subject: Support Needed for S. 4153 Forest Biomass Emissions Act of 2024

Dear [Representative/Senator] [Last Name],

I hope you are doing well! My name is [Your Full Name], and I am writing to you to express my support for the Forest Biomass Emissions Act of 2024 (S. 4153). I hope you will consider endorsing the Act as a co-sponsor in Congress.

The combustion of forest biomass as an alternative clean energy source is becoming increasingly popular in the US. However, compared to fossil fuels, forest biomass releases 2.8 times more pollution. Burning forest biomass releases several harmful greenhouse gasses and pollutants, including particulate matter, lead, and mercury. Lower-income communities, which disproportionately consist of people of color, are more likely to be subjected to the environmental hazards posed by forest biomass facilities.

This legislation will ensure that we have comprehensive data involving the impacts of forest biomass combustion on the environment and communities, helping create more equitable regulatory practices. I thank you for your time and consideration to help promote the development of sustainable energy production.

Sincerely,

[Your Full Name]

[Your City, State]

[Your Email Address]

Template #2: Mobilizing the Community – Email Template for General Awareness

Instructions: Use the following email template to spread awareness about the bill in your community. Consider communicating with local businesses, media outlets, and mailing list subscribers to promote awareness. Fill in information in the brackets [].

Subject: Support the Forest Biomass Emissions Act of 2024!

Hello,

I hope you are doing well! I am excited to inform you about an essential piece of legislation, the Forest Biomass Emissions Act of 2024. This bill will initiate an extensive study of greenhouse gas emissions from the combustion of forest biomass to create more sustainable and equitable regulatory practices.

This legislation is critical to maintain the community's public health and well being. By supporting this program, we can promote greener energy production. You can support the movement by:

1. Contacting your local representatives and requesting them to endorse the Forest Biomass Emissions Act of 2024
2. Sharing this policy resource pack with members in your community to increase awareness about the greenhouse gas emissions study

I appreciate your commitment to ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the impact of forest biomass combustion on the environment and communities. By working together, we can create a positive impact in the community.

Sincerely,

[Your Full Name]

[Your Email Address]

E. Important Resources

Find Your Congressional Officials:

- Congress.gov: www.congress.gov/members/find-your-member
- House.gov: www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative
- Senate.gov: www.senate.gov/senators/senators-contact.htm

Reading Materials:

- [The scientific case against burning forest biomass for energy](#)
- [Carbon Capture Can't Fix the Climate Impacts of Forest Biomass Power](#)
- [Greenhouse gas emissions from burning US-sourced woody biomass in the EU and UK](#)
- [Trees for burning: the biomass controversy](#)
- [Biomass is promoted as a carbon neutral fuel. But is burning wood a step in the wrong direction?](#)

Questions?

- Contact NaturAlly at www.naturallyglobal.org/contact
- Email us at naturallyglobal.org@gmail.com

F. References

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- “S. 4153 — 118th Congress: Forest Biomass Emissions Act of 2024.” *www.GovTrack.us*, 2024, www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/118/s4153.