



City of Northampton

MASSACHUSETTS

In the City Council, March 4, 2021

Upon the Recommendation of: Councilor Alex Jarrett
 Councilor Rachel Maiore
 Northampton Energy and Sustainability Commission

R-21.201

A RESOLUTION IN OPPOSITION TO STATE INCENTIVES FOR BIOMASS PLANTS

WHEREAS, the City of Northampton is committed to ensuring and safeguarding the health, safety, and environment of the residents of our community; and

WHEREAS, wood-burning biomass plants are a highly polluting form of energy generation, known to release pollutants including fine particulate matter, volatile organic compounds, nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide, and carbon dioxide; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth adopted science-driven Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) regulations in 2012 recognizing that wood-burning power plants emit more carbon dioxide than fossil fuel power plants per unit of energy generated; and

WHEREAS, due to the 2012 RPS regulations, the only wood-burning biomass plants eligible for Massachusetts renewable energy incentives have been small, efficient combined-heat-and-power biomass plants; and

WHEREAS, if the weakened RPS regulations proposed in December 2020 by the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (DOER) go into effect, Massachusetts incentives would be available for inefficient large-scale biomass power plants; and

WHEREAS, the proposed RPS regulations would wrongly incentivize the construction of a large-scale wood-burning biomass plant proposed by Palmer Renewable Energy in Springfield, an Environmental Justice community already heavily burdened by industrial air pollution and by record-setting rates of asthma and other respiratory illnesses; and

WHEREAS, particulate and gaseous pollution from the planned Palmer Renewable Energy plant would increase hazardous pollution throughout the Pioneer Valley; and

WHEREAS, our City stands in solidarity with the residents of the City of Springfield, and the Springfield City Council, which passed a resolution on December 21, 2020, opposing Massachusetts state incentives for wood-burning biomass plants,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the City Council of Northampton opposes any state incentives for inefficient commercial wood-burning biomass plants in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council calls upon the Massachusetts DOER to revise the proposed RPS regulations by returning the woody biomass provisions to their previous, science-based language; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council calls upon the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities, and Energy of the Massachusetts Legislature to hold an accessible public hearing on said proposed RPS regulations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council urges its State Legislative Delegation to support state legislation to remove and bar taxpayer and ratepayer incentives for inefficient commercial biomass power plants in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts by making them ineligible to meet the requirements of the Renewable Portfolio Standard; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Administrative Assistant to the City Council shall send a copy of this Resolution to the Springfield City Council, Representative Lindsay Sabadosa and Senator Jo Comerford, as well as Governor Charles Baker, DOER Commissioner Patrick Woodcock, and the Co-Chairs and Vice Co-Chairs of the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities, and Energy, Senators Mike Barrett and Mark Pacheco and Representatives Jeffrey Roy and Paul Mark.

In City Council, March 4, 2021
Passed First Reading on Roll Call Vote of 9 Yes, 0 No, 0 Absent

Attest: Laura Kruttschnitt, Clerk of Council

In City Council, March 18, 2021
Passed Second Reading on Roll Call Vote of 9 Yes, 0 No, 0 Absent

Attest: Laura Kruttschnitt, Clerk of Council

Passed two readings and enrolled.
I hereby certify that the above Resolution passed the Northampton City Council on March 18, 2021

Attest: Laura Kruttschnitt, Clerk of Council