

# DRAX - FORESTS AND MONEY UP IN SMOKE



***Drax is part of the problem, not the solution, in decarbonising our energy system***

Drax burns pellets made from almost 13 million tonnes of wood every year— that’s two million tonnes more than the total annual wood production in the UK.

Over half of Drax’s pellets are imported from North America and many of these come from the clearcutting of the remnants of highly biodiverse coastal wetland forests in the southern US. Some pellets come from monoculture pine plantations which are replacing such diverse forests.



This is bad news for the climate too: forests store and absorb large amounts of carbon. Trees take decades to grow whereas pellets are burned in an instant. Studies show that the climate impacts of cutting down trees for biomass electricity are no better than those of coal when looked at over a period of many decades— i.e. during the crucial period when global carbon emissions must be rapidly cut.



Burning wood and coal both release pollutants into the air. Drax’s air pollution was estimated to cause 590 deaths a year in 2013, and wood dust from biomass causes health problems for workers.



## **Drax remains the joint largest coal burning plant in the UK**

If Drax wasn't burning millions of tonnes of wood, the power station would have had to shut down. Subsidies for biomass allow it to keep burning coal long term (it burnt 2.7 million tonnes in 2016). Coal has the highest upfront carbon emissions of all fossil fuels. The majority of Drax's coal comes from Colombia where opencast mines are linked to serious human rights abuses and land grabs.

### **Drax's subsidies**

At a time when funding for genuinely renewable energy and warm homes is getting slashed, Drax received £541 million in subsidies in 2016 – that's almost 1.5 million a day. Next year, Drax is likely to receive even more – £650 million, or £1.7 million every day. These subsidies are paid out of a surcharge on your electricity bill. Without such massive subsidies, Drax would have had to close down already.



**Drax has no part to play in a sustainable energy future. Drax should be shut down, and the money saved from this go to energy demand reduction, energy conservation, and genuine renewables such as wind, waves and sun.**

More info: [biofuelwatch.org.uk/axedrax-campaign/](http://biofuelwatch.org.uk/axedrax-campaign/)  
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