



Public Health and Environmental Impacts of the Renewable Biomass Plant in Adel, GA August 3, 2020

Renewable Biomass, LLC plans to build a large, industrial wood pellet plant in Adel that will bring substantial amounts of air pollution, truck traffic, and noise to the community. The plant would process 1.5 million tons of trees and wood into 500,000 tons of wood pellets per year, making it one of the largest pellet plants in Georgia. The facility would operate 24 hours per day, 365 days per year, producing pellets for export overseas to be burned for electricity. Impacts of this facility include:

Air Pollution: Manufacturing wood pellets generates significant amounts of harmful air pollution. The company's air permit application shows the proposed facility would emit nearly 800 tons of regulated air pollutants per year, including 100 tons of fine particulates (linked to premature death, heart disease, aggravated asthma and other health issues), 250 tons of nitrogen oxides (causes smog and acid rain), 216 tons of volatile organic compounds (causes smog), and thousands of pounds hazardous air pollutants that are especially toxic or carcinogenic even in low quantities. Neighbors of existing wood pellet plants also complain that their properties are coated in wood dust and soot. Government records reveal that neighbors have complained to state regulators regarding dust, soot and smoke from at least nine of the 22 industrial wood pellet plants in the southern U.S.

Truck Traffic: Renewable Biomass has not released detailed information on truck traffic, but based on similar pellet plants, the facility will likely receive around 250 trucks per day, or nearly 100,000 trucks per year.¹ That equates to a truck trip once every six minutes, 24 hours per day, seven days a week.

Noise: Wood pellet plants are noisy. Neighbors of existing plants have used noise monitors to document noise levels above 80 decibels far beyond the facility's fence line, equivalent to standing next to a lawnmower. High noise levels have been documented at all hours.

Fires and Explosions: Wood pellet plants universally suffer from fires and explosions. A 2018 report documented that more than half of industrial wood pellet plants had explosions or fires that were significant enough to make headlines, and smaller fires occur frequently.² The fires can be extremely difficult to extinguish; a fire in a pellet storage silo in Texas burned for more than 100 days, sending noxious smoke into the surrounding community and prompting numerous lawsuits.

Climate: Wood pellets are branded as a climate solution, but most climate scientists agree that cutting tens of thousands of acres of trees to be shipped internationally is not the right answer to the climate crisis. This facility and the pellets it will produce will emit more than a million tons of carbon per year. These emissions may never be recouped. Even if trees are replanted, it will take decades for new trees to recapture that carbon.

¹ For example, the Enviva Southampton wood pellet plant in Virginia calculated it receives 405 truck trips per day while producing 781,255 tons of pellets per year.

² Dirty Deception: How the Wood Biomass Industry Skirts the Clean Air Act, Environmental Integrity Project (Apr. 26, 2018), <https://environmentalintegrity.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Biomass-Report.pdf>