

STOP DIRTY BIOMASS AND CARBON INJECTION IN THE VALLEY

BACKGROUND:

A group of companies—led by Chevron and Clean Energy Systems (CES)—are purchasing and restarting the idled Covanta Mendota and Delano biomass power plants, while adding the dangerous technology of carbon capture and storage (known as CCS). Their plan is to burn trees and agricultural waste for electricity, and then inject and store the carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions underground. At Mendota, the CO₂ will be stored right under the facility, even though captured CO₂ is a dangerous substance. While the companies claim these projects will help solve air quality problems and climate change, in reality they will worsen the climate crisis and endanger public health and safety.

BIOMASS ENERGY WORSENS AIR QUALITY AND HARMS PUBLIC HEALTH.

- Biomass power plants produce toxic air pollutants, such as particulate matter (PM), that harm the health of residents.
- PM pollution causes an estimated 1,200 premature deaths in the Valley every year. And fine (tiny) particulates, known as PM_{2.5}, are linked to premature death and serious health problems including heart disease, stroke and aggravated asthma.

CARBON CAPTURE AND STORAGE (CCS) POSES SERIOUS SAFETY RISKS TO COMMUNITIES.

- The Mendota and Delano biomass power plants will produce large amounts of CO₂.
- The companies plan to store the CO₂ they capture underneath the Mendota biomass plant. (We don't yet know about the plans for Delano.)
- If the captured and stored CO₂ leaks it can cause suffocation and death. One leak in Mississippi led to the hospitalization of dozens of residents living miles away.
- Underground storage of CO₂ can also contaminate drinking water and trigger earthquakes.

CCS IS A FALSE SOLUTION.

- CCS regularly fails to live up to its promises. In Australia, Chevron promised that their CCS Project would capture 80% of CO₂ emissions, but it only captured 30%. In Canada, a CCS plant emitted more greenhouse gases than it captured.
- CO₂ that isn't captured is emitted into the air, making the climate crisis worse.

TURNING BIOMASS INTO ELECTRICITY WILL NOT HELP THE AIR QUALITY, WILDFIRE OR AGRICULTURAL WASTE BURNING ISSUES.

- The companies claim that reviving the Mendota and Delano biomass plants will help stop the open air burning of agricultural waste, but California already requires an end to agricultural burning in the Central Valley by 2025.
- Instead of burning, agricultural waste should be chipped and added to the soil, composted, or mulched. These solutions would revitalize soil health and increase crop yields.
- Even if the companies capture CO₂, there will still be harmful air pollutants—like particulate matter—from truck traffic and facility operations or malfunctions.
- Studies show that cutting forests and using trees for biomass electricity doesn't work to protect communities from wildfires.

WHAT'S NEXT

As of January 2022, the companies have applied for air permits and at least one underground CO₂ storage permit. They will also need a land use permit from the city or county.

It's not too late to stop these polluting projects from harming our health and the climate. Permits for these facilities need to go through public and environmental review. Community members need to speak up, raise questions and tell the companies and local authorities they don't want these ineffective and dangerous facilities near their homes and families.



Mendota biomass facility, photo by Center for Biological Diversity, February 2022