

Dear Governor Cooper,

We would like to thank you for leadership on addressing climate change: committing North Carolina to uphold the Paris Climate Accord is not only the right thing to do, but is good for all people across our great state. We are writing to you because a proposed new Enviva wood pellet mill in Richmond County, North Carolina would run counter to the state's leadership position on climate<sup>1</sup> and have damaging impacts on the health<sup>2</sup> and quality of life in the local community.<sup>3,4,5</sup>

**Your strong leadership to stop another wood pellet mill from being constructed is needed. We urge you to stop the expansion of the destructive and dirty wood pellet export industry in the state of North Carolina. As a first step, DEQ should revoke the air permit issued to Enviva for failure to correct the inadequate public notice and improper denial of a public hearing.**

Our state's most vulnerable communities have been targeted by Enviva. Richmond County is the latest example, where the community affected by the plant is disproportionately low-income and African-American and already dealing with the negative impacts of several other polluting industries.<sup>6</sup>

Despite being denied an adequate comment period on the plant for years,<sup>7</sup> the Concerned Citizens of Richmond County and citizens across North Carolina are mobilizing to stop Enviva from constructing another wood pellet mill, and they need your support. A lawsuit has been filed to revoke the air permit issued in 2015 for failing to adequately notify the affected community.<sup>8</sup> The NC DEQ has the authority to address this issue outside of the courtroom by revoking the permit, and you can instruct them to do so.

Enviva, the world's largest wood pellet exporter, already has three mills in our state.<sup>9</sup> North Carolina does not need another wood pellet export mill shipping our valuable forests across the Atlantic to be burned in power stations. This a short-term industry

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<sup>1</sup> Hansen, J. et al., 2016. Young People's Burden: Requirement of Negative CO2 Emissions. Available at: <http://www.earth-syst-dynam-discuss.net/esd-2016-42/>

<sup>2</sup> American Lung Association, <http://www.lung.org/get-involved/become-an-advocate/public-policy-position-energy.html>

<sup>3</sup> Dogwood Alliance, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hoJH59Asfkl>.

<sup>4</sup> Dahlgren, J.; et al. Environ Res 2012, 92, 92–98

<sup>5</sup> Alleyne, R.; Arroyo, J., <http://www.wuft.org/news/2013/10/09/locals-frustrated-by-gainesville-biomass-plant-noise/>.

<sup>6</sup> Sorg, Lisa, May 9, 2017. NC Policy Watch. Available at: <http://pulse.ncpolicywatch.org/2017/05/09/citing-lack-public-input-southern-environmental-law-center-challenges-deqs-air-permit-wood-pellet-maker-enviva/#sthash.xRdITNmY.dpbs>

<sup>7</sup> The comment period for the original air permit ran from Sept. 18, 2015, through Oct. 29, 2015. A notice of that comment period ran in the Richmond Journal on Sept. 18. But that permit lacked a required specific address, noting only that the plant would be located at Highway 177, Hamlet. It also listed a zip code for a different county. Given the confusion over its location — and the lack of a public hearing — many residents didn't know they would be living near the plant.

<sup>8</sup> Southern Environmental Law Center, May 5, 2017. Available at: [https://www.southernenvironment.org/uploads/words\\_docs/2017-05-05\\_Concerned\\_Citizens\\_Pet\\_for\\_Contested\\_Case\\_Hrg\\_File\\_Stamped.pdf](https://www.southernenvironment.org/uploads/words_docs/2017-05-05_Concerned_Citizens_Pet_for_Contested_Case_Hrg_File_Stamped.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Phillips, Ari, April 16, 2015. Think Progress. Available at: <https://thinkprogress.org/american-companies-are-shipping-millions-of-trees-to-europe-and-its-a-renewable-energy-nightmare-ef1fdcca1cb4>



dependent on foreign subsidies<sup>10</sup> and policies that are currently being revised as more scientific evidence reveals the climate impacts associated with the forest destruction of the wood pellet industry in North Carolina.

Burning forests for electricity is not a green, clean, climate-friendly fuel.<sup>11</sup> The science is clear - the wood pellet industry is dirty and releases more carbon per unit of energy generated than coal.<sup>12</sup> Additionally, residents in close proximity to Enviva's Sampson County, NC facility have documented increased harmful particulate matter in the air of the local community 75% over preoperative levels.<sup>13</sup>

We are concerned about the impacts that Enviva and the biomass industry are having on Southern forests and communities. We are asking you to stop the export of forests for fuel. We are asking you to, instead, invest in cleaner industries, conservation of our natural forests, and protection of our communities from harmful air pollutants.

We call on you to review and revoke the Enviva air quality permit for their Hamlet facility.

Now, more than ever, we need our state policies to protect North Carolina's most vulnerable communities and move us forward, not backward on climate. Thank you for your attention to this important matter and we appreciate your leadership.

Sincerely,

*[Organization]*

CC: Secretary Michael Regan

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<sup>10</sup> Dogwood Alliance, July, 2015. Economic Report. Available at: <https://www.dogwoodalliance.org/2015/07/lets-look-at-the-true-cost-of-wood-pellet-exports/>

<sup>11</sup> Drouin, Roger, January 22, 2015. Yale Environment 360. Available at: [http://e360.yale.edu/features/wood\\_pellets\\_green\\_energy\\_or\\_new\\_source\\_of\\_co2\\_emissions](http://e360.yale.edu/features/wood_pellets_green_energy_or_new_source_of_co2_emissions)

<sup>12</sup> Chatham House. The Impacts of the Demand for Woody Biomass for Power and Heat on Climate and Forests. February 23, 2017. <https://www.chathamhouse.org/publication/impacts-demand-woody-biomass-power-and-heat-climate-and-forests>

<sup>13</sup> Dogwood Alliance. May 2017. Air Quality Fact Sheet. Available at: <https://www.dogwoodalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Air-Quality-Fact-Sheet-1.pdf>



## **Carolina Organizations:**

350 Asheville  
350 Triangle  
Active Students for a Healthy Environment  
Alliance for Energy Democracy  
Asheville Buncombe County National  
Association for the Advancement of Colored  
People (NAACP)  
Black Star Line Brewing Co.  
Black Workers for Justice  
Blue Ridge General Defense Committee  
Cape Fear River Watch  
Center for Biological Diversity  
Center for Earth Ethics  
Citizens for a Safe Environment  
Clean Air Carolina  
Clean Water for North Carolina  
Community Roots  
Concerned Citizens of Richmond County  
Democracy North Carolina  
Environment North Carolina  
Environmental Law Project  
Equality NC  
Friends of the Earth  
Global Justice Ecology Project  
Green Grannies Asheville  
Greenpeace USA  
Hip Hop Caucus  
Indigenous Environmental Network  
Justice Action Mobilization Network  
Land of the Sky UCC  
Latino Advocacy Coalition of Henderson  
County  
Mountain True  
Natural Resources Defense Council  
(NRDC)  
NC Climate Justice Summit  
NC Interfaith Power and Light  
NC WARN  
New Alpha Community Development Corp  
North Carolina Climate Solutions Coalition  
North Carolina Environmental Justice  
Network

North Carolina League of Conservation  
Voters  
Our Forests Aren't Fuel Wilmington  
Plastic Ocean Project  
Rachel Carson Project  
Renewable Energy Transition Initiative  
Rev. Brian Combs, Pastor, Haywood Street  
Congregation  
Sampson County Citizens for Safe  
Environment  
North Carolina Sierra Club Cape Fear  
Group  
Sound Rivers, Inc.  
South Carolina Sierra Club  
South Wings  
Spruill Farm Conservation Project  
St. Mark's Lutheran Church  
Stand4Forests RDU  
Student Environmental Center: UNC-  
Asheville  
Student Environmental Education Coalition  
Sustain Charlotte  
The Blue Ridge Environmental Defense  
League  
The Canary Coalition  
The North Carolina Council of Churches  
Toxic Free NC  
UNC-Wilmington ECO  
Whitney M. Slater Foundation  
William Bartram Sierra Group  
Witness for Peace Southeast  
Zamani Refuge African Cultural Center

## **Other Concerned Organizations:**

Partnership for Policy Integrity  
Rural Showing Up for Racial Justice of  
Northern California



## **Additional Comments from Organizations:**

“We believe that in a democratic society, people must be given the opportunity to speak out and are allowed to weigh in on issues that affect them.”

“NCDEQ needs to review and revoke the flawed air quality permit, and hold a public hearing for citizen input. Enviva should not be given the go ahead without proper citizen review input.”

“The burden of environmental and social justice ills are most often carried by communities of color, low income communities, tribal communities and marginalized communities. It is unjust that communities like Richmond County who have the least to gain by the addition of another polluting industry in their community will be faced with the toxic risks of this environmental injustice.”

“Please revoke the Enviva air quality permit for the Hamlet facility. NC needs to move to 100% clean renewables with solar, wind, energy efficiency, and protection of our forests!”

“It is up to citizens to protect our environment when government lets us down.”

“It is unethical to impose this plant on the citizens of this Richmond County area knowing that it will seriously degrade their air quality. Surely the GenX fiasco demonstrates that all government agencies have a high responsibility to be as careful as they can about considering public health before allowing polluting industries to set up operation.”

“We can plant trees but we can never plant a forest that takes 100s of years to create the delicate intricacies.”

“We demand the facility not be built.”

