

LET'S GET SMART ABOUT PLANT WIREGRASS BIOMASS AND AIR

Plant Wiregrass Biomass is a 40 MW biomass incinerator facility proposed for Lowndes County near Valdosta. This facility will be burning wood waste and sewage sludge from the Mud Creek Waste Water Treatment Plant. It is being advertised as a “green” technology and that it will be a “renewable” energy provider, but there are a lot of concerns surrounding the proposal. One of the biggest concerns is the impact to our air here in Valdosta and southern Georgia. There are significant air emissions for sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, and carbon monoxide that will be emitted by this one plant. The American Lung Association, the leading organization in the United States that educates, advocates, and researches for lung health and air, has formally announced their opposition to biomass facilities. They said,

“Burning biomass could lead to significant increases in emissions of nitrogen oxides, particulate matter and sulfur dioxide and have severe impacts on the health of children, older adults, and people with lung diseases” (<http://www.lungusa.org/get-involved/advocate/advocacy-documents/Letter-to-Reps-Henry-Waxman-and-Edward-Markey-re-American-Clean-Energy-and-Security-Act.pdf>).

Emissions such as CO (Carbon Monoxide), NOx (Nitrogen Oxides), and SO2 (Sulfur Dioxide) drastically complicate respiratory conditions such as asthma, lung disease, and bronchitis. They “lead to increased mortality especially if elevated levels of particulate matter (PM) are present” (<http://www.gaepd.org/air/information/so2.html>). Plant Wiregrass is estimating 247 tons of these chemicals a year in the air as a result of the wood waste and sewage it will be burning. Currently, there is no regional impact study being done to assess this plant’s contribution to our air quality as it stands now nor as it will stand in addition to the twelve other incinerator facilities proposed for the state with the coal and nuclear plants we already have in operation in the state (Center of Innovation - Energy (GEFA 03.16.2009).pdf).

In addition to the emissions the plant will directly output, there are fugitive emissions that the plant will be responsible for. Fugitive emissions are output particulates that are resulting from diesel truck traffic to and from the plant. Currently, 50 diesel trucks will be traveling to and from the plant within a 60-mile radius to carry the wood waste supply continually for 12 hour days. These emissions are not being calculated in the final emissions estimates. The American Lung Association outlines that these emissions can be deadly, even in short term exposures (<http://www.lungusa.org/assets/documents/publications/state-of-the-air/state-of-the-air-report-2010.pdf>).

What can we do? Want to learn more?

TOWN HALL MEETING REGARDING PLANT WIREGRASS

Date: Thursday, July 8th

Time: 7 p.m.

Location: New Life Ministries, 5651 Inner Perimeter Rd., Valdosta GA 31606