

Wood Panel Industries Federation

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Mr Mike German AM
Sustainability Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff CF99 1NA

14th May 2010

Dear Mr German

I am writing to you following the Sustainability Committee's hearing of 5th May into the biomass industry. I was very grateful to the Committee for giving my colleagues and me the time to talk through some of the issues relating to the use of biomass in Wales for electricity generation. The Committee members clearly had a firm grip on the issues surrounding biomass and its supply; my colleagues and I were very grateful that we were able to bore down to the key points so quickly and succinctly.

As Leanne Wood noted, the Assembly Government's remit extends no further than plants with a generation capacity of 50MW. Although we do feel that there is plenty that can be done regarding these smaller-scale plants to ensure that they provide a sustainable contribution to Wales' power needs, it is critical that large-scale plants planned for Wales are addressed with urgency. The National Assembly and the Assembly Government are key stakeholders in the development of plants such as Prenergy's at Port Talbot and that proposed by Anglesey Aluminium. If the Committee believes that we and other bodies have identified a problem in wood supply and the effect on other sustainable industries, we would urge the Committee to raise this with the UK Government and the Secretary of State for Wales.

We recognise that the relationship between biomass energy policies, the wood panel industry and wood supply is not simple but we believe that a major economic and environmental problem has been exposed. Support for biomass in Wales and across the UK needs to be carefully scrutinised. Therefore, I would be grateful if the Sustainability Committee were to make a formal request to the Energy and Climate Change Select Committee at Westminster to conduct a similar inquiry, but one that encompasses biomass plants over 50MW and their effect on the forest sector and carbon abatement.

I look forward to reading your thoughts on this proposal. If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me at the address above.

Yours sincerely

Alastair Kerr
Director General, Wood Panel Industries Federation

cc: Virginia Hawkins, Clerk of the Sustainability Committee