



LOGGING AND BIO-ENERGY INDUSTRIES MUST COME CLEAN ON NATIVE FORESTS

The logging and wood-chipping industries are using an international bio-energy conference in Melbourne to try to legitimise further industrial scale destruction of Australian native forests, according to a coalition of environmental groups.

The environment groups are coordinating a community campaign to oppose logging native forests for energy and fuel production. This will include a demonstration outside the 'Residues to Revenues' conference in Melbourne on April 15 at 9am, and an International Day of Action. The groups claim that the logging and wood-chipping industries are banking on the bio-energy industry to give them environmental credibility they should not have.

Spokesperson Steve Meacher warns that the so-called 'residue' or 'waste' for the logging industry isn't restricted to leaves, branches and milling residues. "Wood-chipping was originally supposed to use only 'waste' but now supports broadscale industrial logging, taking whole trees from forests better left standing. Over 85% of logged native forests now end up as woodchips. Bio-energy will become responsible for ongoing massive loss of wildlife, water and carbon stores."

"The logging industry also falsely claims that its operations are carbon neutral," said Mr Meacher. "In reality, there is a spiralling 'carbon debt' that takes decades and even centuries to recover. Intact forests which are enormous carbon sinks and stores are destroyed, trees are logged on ever shorter rotations, and burning, processing, transport and toxic chemicals add to the mix to make this one of the dirtiest and least 'renewable' industries in the country."

The environment groups are urging the bio-energy industry and potential customers, to rethink their association with native forest logging. "The public will reject a source of electricity and fuel that comes from destroying forests and wildlife and they don't want to be lied to about it being merely 'residues' either" said Lorraine Bower, from the Australian Forests and Climate Alliance. "Has the bio-energy industry been duped by the forestry industry?"

With endemic unsustainable logging in NSW state forests, and the logging industry push to open national parks up for logging, we need the State and Commonwealth governments to make sure that public native forests are permanently protected for climate, water and wildlife", said Ms Bower. "All logging operations should move to properly certified plantations."

FOR COMMENT:

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'Residues to Revenues' Conference, 6 Queens Road, Melbourne 9am, April 15 2013,
International Day of Action: www.biomassacre.com