

A Resolution in Opposition to State Subsidies & Incentives for Biomass Incinerating Power Plants in Massachusetts

Presented to the Longmeadow Select Board on Tuesday, January 19, 2021

WHEREAS, the Longmeadow Select Board is committed to ensuring and safeguarding the health, safety, and environment of the residents of Longmeadow, Massachusetts, and

WHEREAS, the Longmeadow Select Board is supportive of statewide efforts to transition to renewable energy sources that are less polluting, more efficient, and safer for all of our communities, and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, through its legislative representatives, executive offices and agencies, and Governor, are responsible for planning and executing efforts to transition to renewable energy production, including through state subsidies, tax credits, and incentives, which are ultimately funded by the taxpayers and ratepayers of the Commonwealth, and

WHEREAS, wood-burning biomass incineration power plants are a highly polluting form of energy generation that is known to release pollutants including fine particulate matter, volatile organic compounds, nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide, and carbon dioxide, and

WHEREAS, the Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) legislation passed in 2012 recognized that burning woody biomass cannot be presumed to be carbon neutral, and

WHEREAS, as a result of these determinations proposed large-scale biomass incinerators in Massachusetts have been ineligible for state subsidies, and

WHEREAS, recent efforts in both the Massachusetts Legislature and by the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources indicate that new subsidies and incentives for large scale biomass incinerating power plants are on the verge of being granted for the first time, as evident by legislation passed by the House of Representatives and in the recently released Renewable Portfolio Standard by the Department of Energy Resources, and

WHEREAS, in November of 2020 our neighbors in the Springfield City Council received a resolution from the Springfield Public Health Council in opposition to the legislature's considering of tax credits for biomass incinerators in the Commonwealth stating "the potential adverse health consequences to our extremely vulnerable population are enormous," and

WHEREAS, the proposals being considered by the Massachusetts DOER and the Massachusetts Legislature would wrongly incentivize and directly subsidize the construction of such incinerators in neighboring cities like Springfield under the false premise that they are a renewable form of energy production,

WHEREAS, the Springfield City Council passed a resolution on December 21, 2020, opposing state subsidies and incentives for biomass Incinerating power plants in Massachusetts, and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Longmeadow Select Board opposes any state subsidies or incentives for commercial biomass incinerating power plants in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Longmeadow Select Board calls upon the Massachusetts DOER, Governor Charlie Baker, and DOER Commissioner Patrick Woodcock to revise their proposed final regulations 225 CMR 14 for the Renewable Portfolio Standard and return the standard to its previous, science-based language, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Longmeadow Select Board calls upon the Telecommunications, Utilities, and Energy (TUE) Committee of the Massachusetts Legislature to hold an accessible public hearing on the recently released 225 CMR 14 Renewable Portfolio Standard Regulations, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Longmeadow Select Board calls upon the Massachusetts Legislature to remove any subsidies or incentives for biomass incineration from their forthcoming Climate Legislation, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Longmeadow Select Board urges its elected legislators to file legislation in the forthcoming session of the Massachusetts General Court to remove and bar taxpayer and ratepayer incentives for commercial biomass incineration in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to State Senator Eric Lesser and State Representative Brian Ashe as well as Governor Charles Baker, DOER Commissioner Patrick Woodcock, and Telecommunications, Utilities, and Energy Committee Co-Chairs Mike Barrett and Thomas Golden.