

Michael A. Buoniconti, Superintendent of Schools
Mohawk Trail Regional School District
24 Ashfield Street
Shelbrune Falls, MA 01370
October 18, 2017

Dear Superintendent Buoniconti and Whom It Must Concern:

Mass Forest Rescue Campaign is astounded that you would agree to install a wood pellet boiler to replace an oil furnace at Sanderson Academy, when cleaner, healthier options are readily available!

We furthermore find it of great concern that you would be willing to risk the health of school children and staff, knowing of the many health consequences of biomass heat. A decision was made to accept this DOER administered MACEC SAPHIRE grant for this pellet boiler in May of 2016, even though a stern, thorough letter, warning of specific health risks of biomass heat had been expressed in a letter from the American Lung Association, dated March 2, 2016. ***Did you and other decision-makers not read this warning?*** (**Attachment**: March 2, 2017 Letter from The American Lung Association)

Did you not read the research findings pointing to the results of many studies demonstrating that, “There is no safe amount of 2.5 fine particulates”, particles of varying sizes and origins. (Pellets emitted from wood chip and pellet boilers contain various kinds of toxic particles, immediately released to the surrounding area, and/or added to distant atmospheric content..)

Did you not make the connection between: cutting down trees and worsening climate change? Trees release 40-100% of the Carbon and Greenhouse Gases, both *stored in trees* (the older the tree, the more CO₂ is stored) and also within the degraded soils, disturbed during forest cutting for such biomass boilers. The boilers themselves emit far more CO₂ than any other fuel source. Biomass is neither clean, nor “Carbon Neutral” as is often falsely advertised to be. (Attachment: Woods Hole Research Policy Brief) **How is burning wood commercially, not worsening climate and biodiversity that future generations will rely upon, from heretoforeward?!**

Before your decision was finalized, did you not hear about the Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership Plan to build a pellet (and wood chip) manufacturing facility in the center of the 21-town project, or that the falsely-claimed “sustainable forestry” economic development project would be aimed at providing woody biomass energy, ostensibly to the 21-Town region? If you were told that MTWP (Now H. 2932 sponsored by Rep. Stephen Kulik) is a Plan to conserve forests, you were deceived. In fact, only .7% of the land in MTWP Plan will be set aside in Conservation Easements, already covered by Mas statute, Chapter 61. (A & B) MTWP proposes to use only 10% of the total state and federally taxpayer-funded MTWP Plan proposed budget of \$30,000,000. **MTWP is clearly NOT a conservation effort.**

Why did you not compare pricing and installation options of pellet boilers with clean solar-powered air source heat pumps & mini splits from a huge array of qualified contractors familiar with commercial installations?

Mass Forest Rescue Campaign advocates for: 1) Solar-powered air source heat pumps and mini splits as a positive source for heating and cooling all sizes of buildings, including schools.(Particularly in urban and rural communities, battery storage is a great option, due to the vulnerability of these areas to storm effects and power inconsistencies.)

We also advocate for the legislative support **for:**2) The Commonwealth National (2) Parks Initiative: A Quabbin area NP and Franklin-Berkshire NP. These gorgeous two Parks, offer: immediate protection from logging, pipelines and mining; would be a huge boon for local economic development; and offer a relatively nearby source for people hungry for interactions with undisturbed natural habitat.. Wildlife corridors and hiking trails would connect, one area to another within the park the Franklin-Berkshire area, which would be similar to Acadia National Park in that it would surround the cities and towns.

We hope that, very least, for the short run, that Sanderson will install several high quality fine particulate monitors; and that health effects will be monitored. In the long run, we hope that you take heed of the above factors and therefore consider a clean energy alternative to this pellet boiler. Is it too late to ask for your money back, reinvesting it in truly clean, renewable energy efficient heating and cooling for your school buildings beginning with Sanderson Academy? We hope not!

Thank you for your consideration of the above concerns expressed on National Bioenergy Day.

Yours truly,

Beth Adams – for the Mass. Forest Rescue Campaign
<http://massforestrescue.org>

