

To: Chair Swedzinsky and Members of the Energy Finance and Policy Committee,

February 25, 2025

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. As a climate education professional for over 25 years, I ask you to vote “NO” on HF 249. Independent, peer-reviewed, scientific research on the carbon emissions of wood incineration concludes that burning wood is **not low-carbon, carbon-free, or carbon neutral**. Unbiased, full-carbon-accounting of wood incineration for electricity generation shows that it would be better to burn coal or natural gas than to switch to, or incorporate, biomass combustion.

HF249’s proposed change to the definition of carbon-free shows the heavy hand of the forestry industry, not legislation responding to the needs of Minnesota citizens and U.S. taxpayers. The language is not a “definition” – it is a requirement that “at least 50 percent of a utility’s annual electricity sales in Minnesota” be required by law to profit a particular industry. It is playing favorites with taxpayer and ratepayer costs. It rejects free-market competition, corrupting the existing law to guarantee sales to one industry – an industry that is **not** the cheapest, or the healthiest, for Minnesota.

The wood incineration industry causes significant harm to health, air pollution, water pollution, land degradation. Clear-cutting is often required to reach financially viable levels of incineration. “Limbs, branches, and other bi-products of timber harvesting operations” too often has meant whole trees – as this photo from my former home in Western Massachusetts shows. Note the massive pile of wood “chips” and logged whole trees:



McNeil biomass plant in Burlington, Vermont: Piles of whole logs awaiting chipping. [photo: Chris Matera, Massachusetts Forest Watch]

The biomass incineration industry has a long record of misrepresentation. In this example, McNeil’s [documentation](#) reports that their Vermont plant is fueled with “low-quality trees and logging waste”. On-site photography shows the truth. Incinerators must be fed. Scrap wood isn’t enough, resulting in tree-cutting.

Instead of forcing us to buy polluting electricity that damages health and climate, please vote “no” on HF249. Thank you, Tina Clarke, St. Paul, MN, TinaClarkeOz@gmail.com