

Key Points for MP Outreach



Drax is bad for climate

- Drax is the UK's single biggest carbon emitter, emitting over 13 Mt of CO₂ in 2024
- Drax's emissions are higher than 29 countries
- Burning woody biomass emits just as much, if not more, carbon than coal
- It takes 44-104 years for new trees to reabsorb the carbon emitted by burning trees at Drax: this is time we do not have
- Woody biomass is currently counted as carbon neutral by the Government, in contrary to the advice of the IPCC which specifically warns against assuming the carbon neutrality of biomass.

Drax is bad for forests & biodiversity

- In 2024 Drax burnt 7.3 Mt of wood pellets - equivalent to about 27 million trees per year
- Drax sources from vital and protected forests around the world
- Canada: Drax has been repeatedly exposed for sourcing from primary and old-growth forests, threatening the habitats of rare and endangered species such as Caribou and Black Bears
- US: Drax is routinely sourcing from mature, biodiverse hardwood forests in one of just two Global Biodiversity Hotspots in the US and the area contains at least 30 protected and/or imperilled bird species, including the Wood Stork, Bachman's Warbler, and the Ivory-Billed Woodpecker
- Estonia: Estonia's land sector has recently started to release more carbon than it absorbs due to logging, with the Government predicting this will remain the case until 2050

Drax drives environmental injustice

- Communities in the Southeastern USA are harmed by air pollution emitted by wood pellet mills that supply Drax and other UK power stations.
- Pellet plants are 50% more likely to be sited in "environmental justice" communities (i.e. predominantly non-white communities living below the poverty line)
- Pellet plants release PM_{2.5} air pollution (fine dust), nitrogen oxides, and volatile organic compounds associated with a wide range of health issues.
- Drax has been repeatedly accused of driving environmental racism
- Drax violated environmental regulations 11,378 times in the US between 2014 and 2024 and breached environmental laws 189 times at its Canadian pellet mills.

Say NO to Drax's data centre

- AI Growth Zone criteria favours low-carbon energy infrastructure - Drax is not low-carbon
- If this proposed site went ahead it would mean more forests burnt, communities polluted and higher carbon emissions

Subsidising Drax is the opposite of value for money

- Drax received £869m in green subsidies in 2024 from a levy on energy bills
- Drax has currently received approximately £7bn in green subsidies - through a levy on energy bills meant for real renewables
- In the first half of 2024 Drax received £393m in subsidies, whilst handing a £300m payout to shareholders - our money is being used to subsidise shareholder profits

Bioenergy with Carbon Capture and Storage (BECCS) is a false solution

- BECCS will not generate 'negative emissions' - this claim is based upon the deeply flawed carbon accounting logic that counts it as carbon neutral already
- Large scale BECCS does not exist for woody biomass
- Even if BECCS worked, it would not help us achieve our 2050 decarbonisation targets - the impacts on forests and reduction in their carbon absorption means CO2 would increase for decades
- BECCS is prohibitively expensive - Ember estimates that BECCS at Drax would cost £43bn over its lifetime (approx. £1500 per household)

Drax can't be trusted

- A 2022 Bloomberg investigation found that when energy prices spiked, Drax avoided paying the public back £639m by gaming a loophole in the subsidy scheme - this is not a company that can be trusted with public money
- Drax paid £25m to Ofgem over misreporting of their sourcing data
- A whistleblower accused Drax of deliberately misleading the public and Parliament following the BBC Panorama expose of Drax's sourcing from primary and old-growth forests in British Columbia
- The Financial Conduct Authority is currently investigating Drax over their sourcing and annual reports

Beyond Drax: A Real Green Future

- Yorkshire and the UK deserve real green jobs - research shows there are over 73,000 direct green jobs needed to decarbonise Yorkshire over the next 10 years
- Drax claims BECCS will create 10,000 jobs however, this figure only applies to peak construction and includes indirect and induced jobs - once built, BECCS would require just 375 staff whilst costing the public £43bn
- Green subsidies should be going to genuine renewables and real climate action that would bring down bills and emissions

How politicians can help

- No more money for Drax
- Write to Ed Miliband MP opposing subsidies for Drax and BECCS
- Write to Liz Kendall urging her to reject Drax's bid to build an AI data centre
- Sign the #StopBurningTrees pledge