



City Council
36 Court Street
Springfield, MA 01103

Meeting: 12/21/20 06:30 PM
Department: City Clerk
Category: General
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Sponsors: Lederman, Hurst, Edwards, Fenton, Gomez, Allen, Ramos
DOC ID: 5998

SCHEDULED

RESOLUTION (ID # 5998)

A Resolution in Opposition to State Subsidies & Incentives- Biomass Plants

WHEREAS, the Springfield City Council is committed to ensuring and safeguarding the health, safety, and environment of the residents of Springfield, Massachusetts, and

WHEREAS, the Springfield City Council 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 the planning and executing such 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, a 2012 study by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the Manomet Study, determined that wood-burning power plants are more polluting than fossil fuel power plants, 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, members of the Springfield City Council have opposed these efforts, with eight Councilors submitting comments to the Department of Energy Resources in June of 2019 in opposition to their efforts to weaken standards for biomass in the Renewable Portfolio Standard, and ten Councilors submitting a letter to the Massachusetts Conference Committee on Climate Legislation in August of 2020 in opposition to the inclusion of biomass incentives in forthcoming legislation, and

WHEREAS, in November of 2020 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, cities like Springfield have been historically targeted by polluting industries, resulting in a concentration of pollution for generations that has led to longstanding public impacts including record setting rates of asthma and other respiratory illnesses, and

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

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

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Springfield City Council 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 it’s previous, science based language, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Springfield City Council calls upon the Telecommunications, Utilities, and Energy 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 Springfield City Council 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 Springfield City Council urges the Springfield Legislative Delegation 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 Senators Eric Lesser, James Welch, and State Senator-elect Adam Gomez, State Representatives Angelo Puppolo, Bud Williams, Carlos Gonzalez, Michael Finn, Thomas Petrolatti, Jose Tosado, and Representatives-elect Orlando Ramos and Jake Oliveira, as well as Governor Charles Baker and DOER Commissioner Patrick Woodcock.