

Thursday, Oct. 31, 2019: Flavored tobacco a trick not a treat, Bonneville has my vote in Belfast, questions about proposed wood chip operation

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Questions about proposed wood chip operation

If ever a project screamed out for an environmental impact statement, [PERC's proposed wood chip operation](#) in Orrington is one. PERC is planning to use the electricity it produces to dry huge quantities of Maine wood chips for export as “renewable” energy.

Burning wood chips makes sense environmentally, if sourced from sustainable forests and used efficiently in combined heat and power (CHP) plants.

So the first question to be asked is whether PERC will source its chips from sustainable operations such as — at a minimum — those certified by the Forest Stewardship Council. If not, the project will be a carbon polluter from day one.

The second question to be asked is the size of the overall carbon footprint.

In the PERC proposal, carbon would be emitted not once but three times. First, trash is burned to make electricity to dry the chips. Second, bunker fuel is burned to transport the chips. Third, the chips are burned in biomass plants across the pond that may or may not be CHP efficient.

Without an impact statement, it is hard to imagine that this project won't be a sizeable carbon polluter. Another big carbon source is not what Maine needs at this juncture.

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