



Martin Luiga
Estonian Forest Aid

martin@emaliikumine.ee

The Minister

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Dear Martin Luiga,

I have received your open letter of August 4, 2020, addressed to the Minister for Environment Lea Wermelin and to me, regarding the Danish use of biomass for energy production. I am answering you on behalf of both of us. Let me thank you for raising your concern on this issue, which is a concern I share with you.

The share of renewables in Danish energy consumption has reached 33 pct. in 2018 and biomass is responsible for the majority of this share. Wooden biomass is used for generation of electricity and district heating as well as for heating of private homes. A large share of the wooden biomass used in Denmark is imported from a number of different countries including Estonia.

A large majority of parties in the Danish Parliament agreed in June 2020 on a comprehensive climate agreement for energy and industry. Within the agreement are two initiatives, which intend to improve the sustainability of the Danish energy mix.

Firstly, Denmark is obliged – like Estonia and all other Member States in EU – to implement the revised Renewable Energy Directive (RED-II), which includes requirements for sustainability of use of biomass for energy. The Danish government has agreed with a large majority in the Danish Parliament to implement the directive with more strict sustainability criteria for woody biomass than required by the directive. The aim of the proposal is to ensure that the consumption of forest biomass for energy will be directed towards products from countries or sourcing areas with stable or increasing forest carbon stocks, certified forests and/or residues from forestry and industry. The proposal also aims to address additional requirements for biodiversity and for woody biomass from areas outside forests. The proposal includes an evaluation of the scheme in 2023 to see if any revision is needed.

**Danish Ministry of Climate,
Energy and Utilities**

Holmens Kanal 20
1060 Copenhagen K

P: +45 3392 2800
E: kefm@kefm.dk

www.kefm.dk



Secondly, the parties have agreed upon initiating an analysis to investigate the consequences of reducing the use of wooden biomass for generation of electricity and heat in the long term. It is explicitly required to analyze the consequences for the security of supply and the impact on consumer prices.

I am convinced that we need a nuanced debate on use of biomass. Some categories of biomass like residues from forestry and industry are acceptable in the energy sector. At the other end of the scale, we find biomass from deforestation without replanting, which is unacceptable.

We shall do our utmost to ensure that the biomass we use is as sustainable as possible and in the longer perspective focus on technologies, which are unambiguously CO₂ neutral.

Let me thank you for raising this important discussion.

Yours sincerely,

Dan Jørgensen