



Ein cyf/Our ref WQ82862

Rhys ab Owen Member of the Senedd for South Wales Central

Rhys.abOwen@senedd.wales

26 August 2021

Dear Rhys,

Thank you for your question regarding the felling of mature hardwood forests in the production of wood pellets to supply biomass power stations.

The Welsh Government is committed to strengthening the protection of ancient woodlands as well as expanding woodland creation.

In line with this, Natural Resources Wales (NRW) does not fell mature hardwood forests, except to manage deadly disease (such as Chalara on ash trees). Hardwood forests are managed on long term thinning programmes to support regeneration plans, incorporate safety regimes for public access and in line with Sustainable Management of Natural Resources principles. NRW does not supply any hardwood or softwood material directly to biomass power stations.

There are mandatory sustainability criteria for solid and gaseous biomass used for government supported heat and power generation in the UK. However, whether biomass has a long-term role in a sustainable energy system needs careful consideration so that where possible we avoid pollution and other unintended consequences. In Wales our intention is for wood to be used for products and purposes that maximise its useful life and that have the potential to displace other higher carbon materials: for example the use of timber in construction and the use of wood for products such as insulation. In line with our circular economy ambitions, we also need to reduce waste.

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Gohebiaeth.Julie.James@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Julie.James@gov.Wales

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

We are developing our position on the role of biomass whilst working with other UK administrations. We need to consider whether any sustainability criteria proposed in future is robust enough to meet our Well Being of Future Generation obligations to be a more globally responsible nation.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Julie James". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Julie James AS/MS

Y Gweinidog Newid Hinsawdd
Minister for Climate Change