

# VattenFAIL

## Vattenfall must stop destroying forests and worsening climate chaos

**Vattenfall is today preventing young climate activists from attending their annual general meeting.** In Vattenfall's [Notice to attend, it says:](#) *"The Annual General Meeting is open to the general public. In connection with the meeting, a Question & Answer session will be arranged, in which the general public will have the opportunity to ask questions to the company's management"*. Yet Vattenfall has reached out to Fridays for Future, telling them that not all who want to attend are welcome. Choosing to exclude young people from its annual meeting when they question its harmful climate policies shows once again Vattenfall's priorities: to protect business as usual.

Vattenfall, a Swedish state-owned company, continues to do far too little far too late to address the climate crisis. Vattenfall's pledge is to be "fossil free" within a generation. This is simply greenwashing - they know they must *urgently* stop using *all kinds* of carbon-rich fuels. **The term "fossil-free" is meaningless if it does not deliver emission reductions.**

There is no doubt that we must phase out all fossil fuel burning immediately - this is part of our demands to Vattenfall. But we cannot replace them with other destructive, high-carbon fuels. The science is clear: we must urgently reduce all greenhouse gas emissions, while safeguarding more forests in order to *increase* the amount of carbon stored. Burning forest biomass does the exact opposite; it both *increases* emissions and *reduces* forest carbon stocks.

Last year, 16 environmental organisations from six countries wrote an [open letter to the energy company Vattenfall](#), urging them to cancel their plans to build new biomass plants, to stop selling wood pellets and woodchips to other companies, and to rapidly phase out burning high-carbon fuels, and shift towards clean renewable energy while scaling up energy efficiency and conservation. Nonetheless, Vattenfall has continued to double down on its flawed energy strategy and harmful greenwashing. On receipt of the NGO's open letter, the company's Vice-President [replied](#) with platitudes about 'sustainable biomass'. She claimed that they *"only use residual wood, processing residues from industries like furniture production and recycled waste wood"*. There are three reasons why this statement is misleading:

- 1) Vattenfall's latest [Annual Report](#) confirms that waste products account for just half of its biomass, the use of which Vattenfall wants to significantly increase.
- 2) Logging companies routinely class any biomass, including whole trees, that doesn't end up in a sawmill as 'forest residue'.
- 3) Vattenfall continues to profit from selling wood pellets and woodchips to other companies.

**Vattenfall's existing biomass power and heat plants are located in three countries: Sweden, Germany and the Netherlands. Half of all the wood burned in those plants is sourced from Sweden, where forestry practices are amongst the very worst in Europe:** In *Sweden*, forestry is heavily dominated by industries looking for large quantities of cheap wood, mostly for biomass energy and for pulp and paper. More than [97 per cent of logging is clearcutting - even in old-growth natural forest](#). When forests are [clear-cut, enormous amounts of greenhouse gases are released into](#)

[the atmosphere](#). [Even more carbon dioxide is later released during soil preparation](#) for establishing climate- and environmentally harmful monoculture tree plantations. Vattenfall must immediately stop sourcing biomass from any company that is logging old-growth forests, including so called continuity forest, in Sweden.

In **Berlin**, Vattenfall is planning a five-fold increase in the amount of wood burned for energy, with two new biomass plants proposed, one on the site of the current coal power station Reuter West, the other on the site of a gas-fired plant in Klingenberg. Climate campaign groups across the city oppose such an increased reliance on biomass burning and urge Vattenfall to sell their heat network and plants to the City of Berlin at a low cost. Bürgerbegehren Klimaschutz, Berlin Energy Table and others [argue that such a re-communalisation of energy, i.e. putting energy back under democratic control, is a prerequisite to a transition towards genuinely low-carbon, renewable heat](#). Vattenfall must stop investing in burning wood, much of which comes directly from forests, and they must refrain from selling its heat network and plants to a private company and return it to the City instead.

In Diemen, next to **Amsterdam**, Vattenfall has still not abandoned its plans to build the largest wood-pellet fired heat plant in the Netherlands, [despite major opposition from local authorities and residents](#). There are also [ongoing legal proceedings against the nature permit, raised by the Clean Air Committee \(Comite Schone Lucht\)](#) in collaboration with other international NGOs. [Vattenfall's CEO, Anna Borg, has stated that Vattenfall will not build "a biomass plant that nobody wants"](#). The protests and the lawsuit that have been filed make it very clear that people in the Netherlands don't want Vattenfall's biomass plant in Diemen. Vattenfall must shift towards genuine sustainable heat sources such as heat pumps powered by wind and solar power, instead of burning wood.

A growing number of scientists have also sounded the alarm: In an [open letter, nearly 800 scientists warned that forest bioenergy could produce more carbon emissions than fossil fuels during the next 50-100 years](#). **It is remarkable that Vattenfall ignores the science when it comes to the impacts of large-scale wood bioenergy.** We demand that:

- *Vattenfall must urgently phase out fossil fuels, within a generation is far too slow.*
- *Until the fossil phaseout is completed, Vattenfall must publish its supply chains and ensure that no fuels linked to human rights abuses, [such as "blood coal" from Colombia, is burned](#).*
- *Vattenfall must rapidly phase out burning biomass for energy. Vattenfall must stop producing and selling wood pellets and wood chips to other energy companies.*
- *Until this phaseout is completed, Vattenfall must immediately stop sourcing biomass from any company that is logging old growth forests, including so called continuity forest in Sweden.*
- *Until this phaseout is completed Vattenfall must publish the origin and types of wood it burns as required, for example, by the UK energy regulator.*
- *Vattenfall cancels plans for new biomass plants in Diemen, Netherlands, and in Berlin, Germany.*
- *Vattenfall must rapidly shift towards truly renewable energy such as wind, solar and geothermal energy, and rapidly scale up investments in energy efficiency and conservation.*

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