General Plan Update
Final Environmental Impact Report hearing
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My comments today are regarding several of the Impacts and Mitigation Measures of the Final EIR. They are in section 4.3 Air Quality, section 4.4 Energy and climate change, section 4.6 hydrology, water quality, and drainage, and section 4.11 biological resources.

My concern is that some of the goals and strategies of the General Plan Update are in need of mitigation but were not included in the Draft and Final EIR. In some cases, these unmitigated goals were used themselves as mitigating measures.

These unmitigated goals and strategies share a commonality with the following General Plan Update components:

1. Green house gases
2. Global Warming/Climate Change
3. Carbon sequestration
4. Forest thinning
5. Biomass energy

And they directly affect the following:

1. Air quality
2. Water quality
3. Biological resources
4. The health of our forests

The specific goals and concepts are Biomass energy and forest thinning.

Biomass energy was not mitigated and it was used as mitigating measures. Biomass energy has the following five detrimental issues:

1. Global Warming and Air quality.

   Humans must stop burning coal, oil, natural gas, and now, biomass in energy engines. Burning these materials release green house gases that are causing our planet to warm. Global warming/climate change is a serious threat to human existence. The CO2 levels on earth is now at 400 parts per billion – levels that only existed 2.5 millions years ago. On July

3rd of this year, the World Meteorological Organization reported that the 2001-2010 decade "was the warmest since the start of modern measurements in 1850 and continued an extended period of pronounced global warming."

Just like clean coal, there is no such thing as clean biomass combustion. Last Tuesday, the Sierra Institute gave a presentation on biomass energy to the Board of Supervisors. They depicted having biomass energy engines at our schools, hospitals, and other locations. It follows that these engines will operate daily and therefore will continuously spewing green house gases and particulates.

Burning biomass will directly and continuously contribute to air pollution in Plumas County.

2. Carbon sequestration

   Biomass engines are not carbon neutral and do not contribute to carbon sequestration.

   The CO2 in the biomass feedstock was banked but now this CO2 will be released back into the atmosphere resulting in additional accumulation of CO2. In order for biomass energy to be carbon neutral, new trees and plant life must be planted and attain sufficient growth to equal the CO2 sequestered from the original feedstock.

3. Forest Resources

   Biomass engines will require feedstock from our forests. Operators will employ workers to extract biomass from our forests. They will require gasoline and diesel trucks and equipment to extract the biomass thus contributing to air pollution and green house gases.

   Operators will require that the Biomass engines operate 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. This will require a never-ending supply of feedstock. I fear this will create such a demand for feedstock that the result will be indiscriminate extraction of healthy and needed trees.

4. Forest Health

   As with all life, the forest and trees require nutrients to grow and to be healthy. The primary source for forest nutrients is the decomposition of biomass that has accumulated on the forest floor.

Biomass engines, and now I will include 'forest thinning', both remove the necessary biomass from the forest that would eventually fall to the forest floor and decompose and thus replenishing the nutrients required for a healthy and growing forest.

Without replenished nutrients, existing tree growth and health will be minimized or even prevent new trees and plant life from growing.

This also directly effects carbon sequestration in trees. It is the leaf parts of trees that perform photosynthesis, that produce the energy for a tree to grow. Without sufficient nutrients absorbed by tree roots, leaf parts create less energy, and thus less growth. And, therefore, less carbon sequestration.

Smaller trees, fewer trees, and less healthy trees are also detrimental to the ~~lumber~~ timber industry.

5. Water Quality and Biological resources

   The act of thinning forests and removing forest biomass also affects water quality and Biological resources. An important function of a forest is to provide a watershed and to filter water. Removing tree and other organic matter diminishes the ability of the forest to perform these extremely important functions.

   Likewise, a thinned forest removes the natural habitat that is required for plant and animal species to survive. For instance, birds use snags, limbs, and logs for perching, foraging, and nesting. Other animals thrive in, around, or underneath fallen logs.

6. End.

The proponents of biomass energy engines and forest thinning justify these practices as means to prevent and/or mitigate forest fires. In the case of biomass energy, it does generate heat and electricity, but I argue it will cause more harm than good. In reality, the proponent's only true justification is that it is a business seeking profits... at the expense of the health of our forests, our environment, and the health of people.

To offer an alternative to biomass energy, we should take the millions of dollars that would go to these biomass incinerators and build solar electric generation plants and place solar hot water and solar electric generation systems on everyone's rooftops.

Forests, healthy forest, have been on Earth for millions of years. Forest fires are natural events that are obviously not detrimental to their existence. It is only offensive to humans and their property.

The only reason we are experiencing more forest fires today is because of drought and higher temperatures brought on by global warming and climate change.

Therefore, it is my request that the General Plan Update be modified to specifically state that Biomass energy engines are not permitted in Plumas County and that forest thinning is used in strict moderation, if at all.

This concludes my comments – thank you for listening.