

Prevention and Mitigation of Health Impacts of Biomass Power Plants

The Fifth National Health Assembly

Having considered the report on prevention and mitigation of health impacts of biomass power plants,¹

Anxious and concerned that even though the policy advocating the use of biomass energy is a good choice, in practice the promotion of biomass power plants still lacks practical guidelines and measures for prevention and control of health impacts, particularly regarding small power plants, and that as a result, the development of biomass power plant has not been sustainable,

Recognizing community rights to participate in studies of potential impacts and decision making at all levels and to have surveillance and oversight mechanisms, as well as appropriate rehabilitation and remedies for those affected by biomass power plants,

Commending the Alternative Energy Development Plan that attaches importance to the utilization of agricultural leftovers as well as the Constitution and relevant laws that bestow the rights to the people and initiate the health impact assessment process,

Has, therefore, adopted the following resolutions:

1. Requesting the National Health Commission to submit the resolutions adopted by the National Health Assembly regarding prevention and mitigation of health impacts from biomass power plants to the cabinet for consideration and approval and for the cabinet to assign relevant agencies to do the followings:

1.1 Requesting the Ministry of Energy to mandate the Department of Alternative Energy Development and Efficiency under the Office of Energy Regulatory Commission, in collaboration with concerned agencies, to explore overall provincial capacities to accommodate the development of biomass power plants and to develop an energy development plan and a biomass energy master plan of each province, involving public participation, in order to adopt them as a framework for development and approval of power plant projects in each area;

1.2 Requesting the Department of Public Works and Town & Country Planning to act as a principal agency, in collaboration with the Department of Industrial Works and Office of Energy Regulatory Commission and concerned agencies to improve standards and guidelines for land use in town planning so that they can be adopted as guidelines for development of a land use provision for biomass power plant;

1.3 Requesting the Department of Industrial Works to act as a principal agency, in collaboration with the Office of Energy Regulatory Commission, Department of Public Works and Town & Country Planning and concerned agencies to revise the power plant industry classification list to include sub-categories in order to ensure coherence in the stipulation of measures aimed at controlling and preventing impacts of biomass power plants;

1.4 Requesting the Office of Energy Regulatory Commission to act as a principal agency, in collaboration with the Department of Industrial Works, Department of Health, Office of

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National Health Commission and concerned agencies to review and revise the criteria, methods and conditions for license issuance notification that include the following:

1. Stipulating a suitable location and distance between a power plant and the communities, public facilities, water sources and natural resource conservation sites,
2. Revising operational standards of biomass power plants pertaining to quality of emission from power plant stacks, quality of fuels, efficiency of incinerators and air cleaning equipment before emission is released into the atmosphere.
3. Developing a plan that encourages development and utilization of modern, low-pollution technology.
4. Developing additional guidelines on fuel and ash storage that clearly stipulates a closed storage system to prevent dust particles being blown away,
5. Developing measures to penalize operators that have been disqualified or failed to comply with the regulations and ensure that the general public is informed accordingly,
6. Establishing a compensation fund for those affected by biomass power plants to provide assistance and remedies to those affected by biomass power plants;

1.5 Requesting the National Health Commission Office, in collaboration with the Office of Natural Resources and Environment Policy and Planning, Office of Energy Regulatory Commission and concerned agencies, to develop a handbook and study guidelines on health impacts of biomass power plants, to disseminate and enhance the understanding of public participation in health impact assessment at community level in pre-licensing, monitoring and surveillance processes;

1.6 Requesting the Department of Health under the Ministry of Public Health, in the capacity of the Secretary-General of the Public Health Commission as mandated by the Public Health Act B.E. 2535 (1992) to collaborate with concerned agencies to undertake the following:

(1) Studying and developing a practical guideline for control and prevention of health impacts from operation of biomass power plant.

(2) Proposing to the health minister to issue an announcement under the mandate of the Enterprises with Health Hazards Chapter of the Public Health Act B.E. 2535 (1992) requiring the operations of biomass power plant that are harmful to public health, as well as construction and operations of all sizes of biomass power plants, to have a health impact prevention and mitigation plan;

(3) Encouraging local government organizations to issue local ordinances to control operations of biomass power plants and to collaborate with concerned agencies in disseminating correct information and knowledge about health impacts to the public;

2. Requesting the Secretary-General of the National Health Commission to present a progress report to the Seventh National Health Assembly.