

CORPORATE DESTROYERS OF BIODIVERSITY



BIOMASS



Wooden biomass / Getty Images

WANTED FOR:

Causing forest destruction, perpetuating human rights abuses, releasing emissions and greenwashing

ROLE IN DRIVING BIODIVERSITY LOSS:

The biomass industry promotes burning wood for energy as a climate solution despite growing evidence that it increases emissions, drives forest destruction, and causes biodiversity loss worldwide.

SOME OF THE LARGEST PLAYERS:

The largest producers and users of biomass include Drax Group, Enviva, Graanul Invest, RWE, Erex, GS EPS, Vattenfall, and Orsted.

IMPACTS:

- Environmental: Deforestation and forest degradation, biodiversity loss caused by wood harvesting, increased emissions from burning wood, water shortages driven by monoculture plantations, air pollution and pollutants from pellet production
- Social: Land grabbing, competition for land, human rights violations, violations of Indigenous Peoples' rights, severe health impacts of pellet production facilities
- Economic: Harmful subsidies sustain biomass expansion despite its climate and biodiversity impacts, crowding out investment in genuinely low-carbon energy solutions. Increasing wood prices affect the wood-processing industry and raise household energy costs, increasing the risk of energy poverty.



An area of forest logged for biomass in Gorontalo, Indonesia / Forest Watch Indonesia

LAST KNOWN ACTIVITY

- Nearly half the EU wood harvest is burnt for energy, driving overlogging under so-called “sustainable forest management”.
- Pellet producers have repeatedly broken US federal law by emitting dangerous chemicals.
- Major economies spent nearly \$250 billion on biomass subsidies over 22 years from 2002-2024.

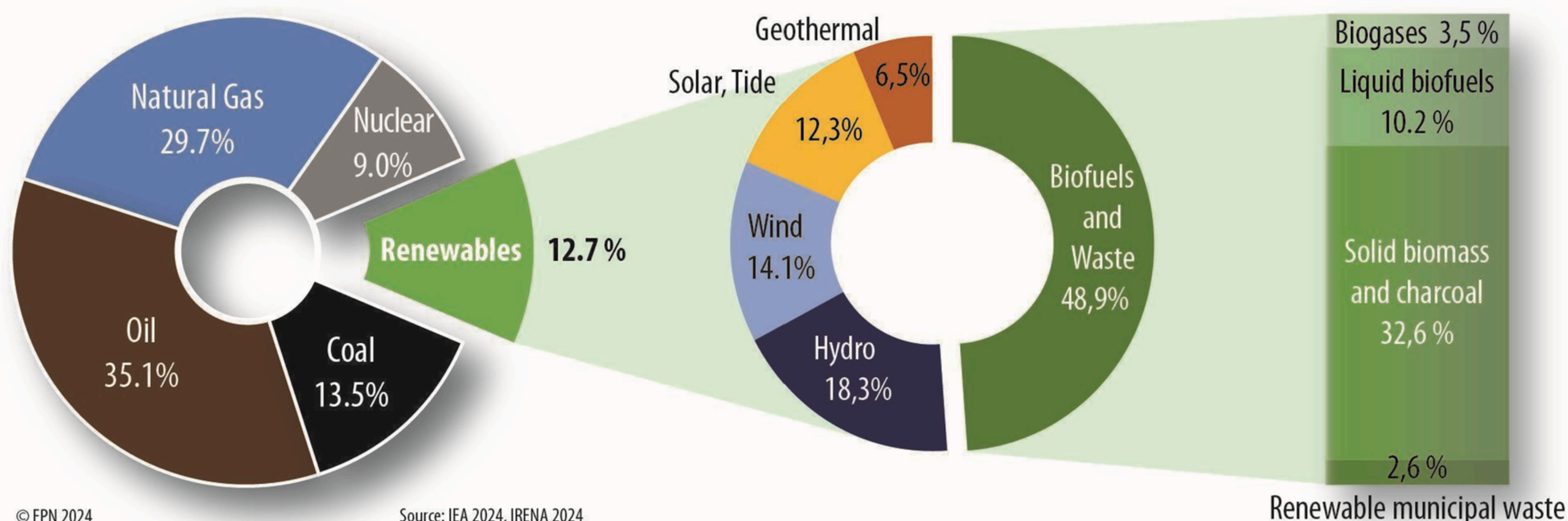
INCIDENT LOG

- CASE #01: RWE INVESTIGATED FOR WOOD PELLETS LINKED TO RAINFOREST DESTRUCTION
- CASE #02: DRAX INVESTIGATED FOR MISLEADING SHAREHOLDERS WITH SUSTAINABILITY CLAIMS
- CASE #03: HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS REPORTED IN COMMUNITIES ACROSS 10 COUNTRIES

Total primary energy supply in industrialised (OECD) countries in 2022



Fuel shares in 2022 OECD total primary energy supply



Source: EPN, *Burning Up the Biosphere* 2024

CASE STUDY: RAPID BIOMASS EXPANSION THREATENS FORESTS GLOBALLY

In OECD countries, nearly 50% of renewable energy is derived from crops and forests. Carbon accounting loopholes and policy incentives continue to drive expansion of the biomass industry. Under the International Energy Agency's Net Zero scenario, woody biomass supply triples and short-rotation woody crops increase thirteenfold by 2030, putting forests under growing pressure and threatening millions of hectares of natural forest with conversion to monoculture plantations.

WITH INFO FROM:

Burning Up the Biosphere (EPN, 2024);
Burning Billions for Biomass (EPN, 2025).



REAL SOLUTIONS



Governments should:

- Phase out biomass subsidies by 2030 in line with Target 18 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework
- Ensure climate and biodiversity policies do not incentivise biomass, but genuine renewables
- Protect natural forests from logging for energy and prevent expansion of monoculture plantations
- Uphold Indigenous Peoples' and community rights.

Meeting global biodiversity goals requires phasing out harmful biomass subsidies, protecting natural forests from energy production, and ensuring that climate policies do not drive biodiversity loss.

WRITTEN BY:



WITH SUPPORT FROM:

