

## LETTER TO THE DANES ON THEIR PART IN THE OVERUSE OF ESTONIAN FORESTS

Minister for Climate, Energy and Utilities, Dan Jørgensen  
Minister for Environment, Lea Wermelin

Members of the Climate, Energy and Utilities Committee (Folketinget, the Danish Parliament)  
Members of the Environment and Food Committee (Folketinget, the Danish Parliament)  
The nation of Denmark

Denmark prides itself over being among the climate leaders.

However, the Danish government has not "united behind the science" on the question of woody biomass. The European Commission's own scientific advisory body [limits sustainable biomass use for energy](#) to local wood and using wood waste and residues. Denmark is the largest buyer of wood pellets produced in Estonia. These are not local, and Graanul Invest, the largest pellet producer in the EU, openly admits that it uses whole trees and waste/residues in a 1:1 ratio, while the ratio itself has not been verified.

The Estonian Fund for Nature, one of the most well regarded and active Estonian environmental NGOs has [expressed its opinion](#) about the supposed sustainability of the pellet trade:

*"The biomass harvest and exports from a country that is losing its carbon sink and is on the course of decline in forest carbon stock is not sustainable in climate perspective, even if criteria is met on forest unit level. Nor is it sustainable from the perspective of protecting biodiversity of forests: Estonian forest bird numbers are in decline and most forest habitat types are in unfavorable state despite the huge area covered by different existing certification schemes. These observations apply to certification based on Chain of Custody risk assessment and that based on a series of detailed management practices descriptions on a forest unit level alike. Both turn a blind eye on wider problems this new industry brings to forest management in general."*

The Brussels-based sustainable forest policy organization Fern [recently described](#) the current Estonian forest policy thus:

*"Estonia is logging its forests at a rate that would reduce its forest sink by more than a half." -- referring to if the current harvesting levels were maintained over the next decade -- both the industry's representatives and state's development plans support an even greater volume.*

Estonia is, in fact, one of Europe's most intensive forest economies. As the EU Commission has pointed out that the entire EU's forest sector is not sustainable neither [climate-](#) nor [biodiversity-wise](#), it follows that in Estonia these problems would be seen most intensively. And indeed, there has been [over three years](#) of intense public opposition to the extant forest policy.

It is widely agreed that the sustainable harvesting level for Estonian forests is around 8 million cubic meters per year. The Estonian Environmental Agency estimated in 2013 that the maximum sustainable logging volume (doubles for a climate neutral logging volume in that equation) for Estonia is 8,4 Mm<sup>3</sup>. The Estonian forest policy frame document from 1997 states it as 7,8 Mm<sup>3</sup>. An impact assessment ordered by the Estonian Ministry of the Environment and conducted by the Stockholm Environmental Institute Tallinn put it at 8 Mm<sup>3</sup>, this time regarding the conservation status of Natura species in Estonia (the impact assessment was [rejected by the Ministry](#) as 'centered on the aims of protecting the climate and biodiversity').

However, Estonian logging volumes over the last 10 years have been 10,7 Mm<sup>3</sup> on the mean, reaching 12,5 Mm<sup>3</sup> in 2017 and 2018. This is widely regarded as a serious problem in Estonia on various levels, starting with the locals whose life environment is changed beyond recognition and ending with purely economic concerns which the unsustainable use of a sustainable resource brings.

As four million cubic meters of our forest is exported for biomass yearly, and in the recent years Denmark has been importing over 50% of our pellet produce, this makes Denmark to a high degree complicit in the destruction of our environment. In fact, the Danish taxpayers' money is being used to fund it, albeit indirectly, through tax exemptions rather than direct subsidies, with the effect however being the same - a needlessly carbon and land area intensive energy policy. We are wholly unsure whether this is really the actual wish and intent of the majority of Danish citizens.

We urge you to reconsider any funding of woody biomass energy. Estonia is a small country which is still suffering from its difficult political past. The political support for sustainable forestry [is weak](#) due to large influence of the forest sector. The forest industry has subjected the Ministry to regulatory capture.

Estonia would get on the path of sustainability and good public governance faster with help from the older members of the democratic family, like Denmark. It would benefit us all. According to the UN's Aichi Biodiversity Target 3, also a part of the European Forest Strategy, all incentives harmful to biodiversity should be eliminated, phased out or reformed in order to minimize or avoid negative impacts by 2020.

Respectfully

1. Martin Luiga, Estonian Forest Aid, international cooperation coordinator
2. Aivar Ruukel, Estonian Nature Tourism Association, Member of the Board

3. Liina Steinberg, Save Estonia's Forests, Member of the Board
4. Henri Holtsmeier, Fridays For Future Estonia, national coordinator
5. Madis Vasser, Estonian Green Movement, Member of the Board
6. Aili Saluveer, biologist, office manager at the Estonian Environmental Education Society
7. Ahto Kaasik, head of Hiite Maja Foundation
8. Anu Aug, head of Ohtu Nature Society
9. Uku Lilleväli, Estwatch, Board Member
10. Linda-Mari Väli, Estonian Forest Aid, communications and cooperation coordinator
11. Lauri Villau, DJ
12. Tiia Kõnnussaar, childrens' writer
13. Anneli Palo, University of Tartu, landscape ecologist (PhD)
14. Sulev Iva, University of Tartu, lecturer of South Estonian language and culture (PhD)
15. Tiina Urm, entrepreneur, coach, environmentalist
16. Kadri Allikmäe, Let's Do It 2008 civic action
17. Anna Hints, film director and folk singer
18. Jonas Nahkor, natural sciences teacher
19. Tanel Rander, artist and critic
20. Piret Räni, artist and children's' writer
21. Krista Kampus, ThinkTank Global Utmaning
22. Tuuli Reinsoo, independent artist
23. Peeter Laurits, artist
24. Andre Pichen, artist, environmentalist
25. Ott Kiens, Respiratory physician, Tartu University lecturer in Medicine
26. Kristjan Kalde, artist, designer
27. Val Rajasaar, nature photographer, teacher at Muraste Nature School, journalist
28. Mihkel Kangur, Tallinn University, Senior researcher of Ecology, Associated professor of sustainable development
29. Maarja Mitt-Pichen, actress and voice coach
30. Lauri Klein, biologist, project manager for bat protection in Estonian Fund for Nature
31. Helen Orav-Kotta, University of Tartu, Estonian Marine Institute, Senior Researcher of Marine Biology
32. Heli Piisang, education leader
33. Igor Uibo, journalist
34. Liisa Sõmersalu, PhD candidate, Södertörn University
35. Grete Arro, educational psychologist, researcher at Tallinn University
36. Virve Sõber, University of Tartu, ecologist (PhD)
37. Mart Kangur, poet and translator
38. Dagmar Kase, vegan feminist activist, animal rights activist and blogger
39. Marcus Pertel, brand strategist and mental health activist
40. Hasso Krull, poet, translator, editor
41. Asko Tamme, Tartu, Deputy Mayor
42. Kadri Kõusaar, writer and film director, Tallinn City Councillor
43. Martin Oja, writer and DJ

44. Arne Ader, biologist and wildlife photographer
45. Triinu Meres, writer
46. Aet Annist, senior researcher in anthropology
47. Lea Tammik, designer, photographer, Estonian Forest Aid coordinator
48. Anzori Barkalaja, cultural anthropologist, educator
49. Aare Pilv, writer and literary scholar
50. Helena Läks, writer and editor
51. Katrin Jõgisaar, editor-in-chief of Bioneer.ee portal
52. Anders Härm, lecturer at the Estonian Academy of Arts and freelance curator
53. Heie Marie Treier, art historian
54. Heli Allik, translator
55. Alari Allik, japanologist
56. Joosep Matjus, filmmaker
57. Jürgen Rooste, poet
58. Laura Luide, autism and disability activist
59. Virve Sarapik, Estonian Academy of Arts, professor and senior researcher
60. Maarja Kangro, writer, Estonian Writers' Union, member of board
61. Margus Ott, philosopher
62. Märt-Matis Lill, composer
63. Andres Köpper, musician and film director
64. Triinu Tamm, editor, translator
65. Maarja Nuut, composer and musician
66. Aapo Ilves, writer and musician
67. Sven Parker, artist
68. Jaak Johanson, musician
69. Mati Sepp, forester
70. Helena Eenok, entrepreneur
71. Lisette Kampus, activist, inbetween positions
72. Ülo Krigul, composer
73. Jüri Kolk, writer and translator
74. Lenne Rähn-Kuusik, local activist
75. Laura Kuusk, artist, associate professor of Estonian Academy of Arts
76. Rein Raud, writer and professor of Tallinn University
77. Mudlum (Made Luiga) writer and literary critic
78. Jüri Lipping, political philosopher
79. Leo Luks, philosopher and poet
80. Maria-Kristiina Ulas, artist
81. Siim Lill, theologian
82. Katrin Väli (Hallas), poet and translator
83. Amar Annus, scholar
84. Kirke Kangro, artist, dean of Fine Art at EKA
85. Anne Daniel-Karlsen, psychiatrist
86. Maarja Daniel, translator

87. Eeva Park, writer
88. Christian Aun, activist, storage worker
89. Ene-Liis Semper, artist and theatre director, professor of Estonian Academy of Arts
90. Pille Epner, Estonian Academy of Arts, Research and Development Office
91. Kadri Kalle, sustainability educator
92. Monika Mattiesen, flutist and composer
93. Anneli Kuusk, teacher
94. Laura Põld, artist
95. Sirel Heinloo, literary researcher
96. Margus Vihalem, Associate Professor of Philosophy, Tallinn University
97. Toomas Trapido, coordinator of Gaia Academy
98. Peeter Vissak, Coalition Clean Baltic (Board), Estonian Green Movement, guide
99. Mehis Heinsaar, writer
100. Kaia-Kaire Hunt, mental health nurse, Head of School of Indigenous Wisdom and Folk Medicine
101. Jaanus Sooväli, philosopher
102. Marju Unt, founder and CEO, Estonian Euromanagement Institute
103. Edward Mardo, poet, musician
104. Levo Tohva, hiking guide and entrepreneur
105. Johannes Säre, artist, director of Contemporary Art Museum of Estonia
106. Sigrid Viir, artist
107. Hanna Uibo, tech writer/analyst
108. Liis Kuresoo, forest expert in Estonian Fund for Nature
109. Ruudu Ulas, artist
110. Janno Kuldkepp, liberal carpenter
111. Rein Kuresoo, conservationist and writer
112. Eva Labotkin, artist and lecturer at the Estonian Academy of Arts
113. Stewart Johnson, author, comedian and educator
114. Jaak Rand, nature protection semiotician
115. Mirjam Pullerits, conservation worker
116. Piret Karro, cultural journalist
117. Janno Lepind, engineer, musician, sociologist
118. Mait Vaik, writerUniversity, biologist, private forest owner
119. Erika Renel, freelance journalist
120. Minna Hint, freelance artist and documentary film director
121. Kris Haamer, software developer and filmmaker
122. Berit-Bärbel Rebane, artist and art teacher
123. Terje Põvvat, science teacher, Save Estonia's Forests, Member of the Board
124. Mikk Jäger, artist
125. Helle Karis, grand lady of Estonian film, "the Fairy Tale Mother"
126. Oleg Kalinkin, web developer
127. Timur Sagitov, geodesy engineer
128. Ülle Kauksi, writer

129. Marit Mihklepp, artist
130. Marten Esko, curator and managing director at the Contemporary Art Museum of Estonia (EKKM)
131. Joel Arula, software developer
132. Nika Kalantar, museum worker, teacher, activist
133. Mattias Turovski, environmental ethicist
134. Aleksei Turovski, zoologist
135. Mari-Anne Philips, researcher
136. Laurie Hayes, instructional designer
137. Raul Kübarsepp, designer, entrepreneur, Digital Communication Specialist at the Estonian Fund for Nature
138. Mattias Luha, Board Member of Estonian Continuous Cover Forestry Association
139. Andri Ksenofontov, unemployed
140. Siim Ots, University of Tartu, MSc geology
141. Mari Laanesaar, Board member of Rapla County Nature Conservation NGO, private forest owner
142. Indrek Tammoja, musician, Living Gaia Estonia NGO
143. Ats Parve, artist
144. Günter Kits, musician, IT-expert
145. Maria Aua, filmmaker
146. Kadri Org, Estwatch, Board Member and communication adviser
147. Helene Uppin, researcher in education, MSc environmental sciences
148. Jako Kull; theologian, anthropologist of religion
149. Karin Reinberg, filmmaker
150. Sandra Urvak, photographer, lecturer of photography, Board Member of the environmental organisation Niilusoo NGO
151. Hele-Mai Viiksaar, literary scholar
152. Elise Rohtmets, writer and activist
153. Tatiana Stomakhina, artist, poet and translator
154. Edvin Aedma, game industry entrepreneur
155. Triin Tekko, biologist
156. Markus Pau, carpenter
157. Regina Kaasik, Interior architecture student in Estonian Academy of Arts
158. Merilin Kaup, architect
159. Ulla Alla, Estonian Young Architects Union
160. Carolina Pihelgas, writer and translator
161. Tõnis Vilu, writer and editor
162. Jaan Kangilaski, editor
163. Joosep Susi, literary scholar
164. Joosep Vesselov, writer
165. Kristjan Haljak, poet, translator
166. Kadri Taperson, AR activist, social pedagogue
167. Anu Trubetsky, board member of Ohtu Nature Society

168. Priidik Hallas, DJ, rapper
169. Siiri Alberg, teacher
170. Merle Tootsi, freelancer artist
171. Helena Ankur, ambulance doctor
172. Jaanika Kolk, company executive and artist
173. Tanel Lebedev, vegan activist and poet
174. Anny Drobet, vegan activist and designer
175. Jaan Tätte jr, musician
176. Aili Ohlau, Environmental Information non-profit (Keskkonnateave MTÜ) Member of the Board, private forest owner
177. Paula Lepparu, Eastern nature therapist, poet, activist
178. Silvi Lepparu, member of the Estonian Artists' Association and Estonian Painters' Association
179. Anna Vainu, runo singer
180. Indrek Vainu, Son of the Forest, environmental activist
181. Egon Holger Erik Liinar, Social Democratic Youth of Estonia/ Security worker
182. Diana Koit, artist, designer
183. Anneli Kaarma, private forest owner
184. Andres Väiko, artist, graphic designer
185. Ingriin Rääk, student
186. Kristel Birgit Potsepp, communication manager/student
187. Igor Ahmedov, PhD Student, University of Winchester
188. Risto Bakhoff, graphic designer, environmental activist
189. Mirjam Korsten, student
190. Laura Välik, journalist, Rapla County Nature Conservation NGO member
191. Gerda Välik, preschool teacher
192. Anneli Leinpere, web designer, teacher
193. Mirjam Zautina, Tartu University Museum of Natural History
194. Tuuli Dolgošev, librarian
195. Deivi Norberg, PhD Student, Queen Mary, University of London
196. Karl Patrick Norberg, PhD Student, SOAS, University of London
197. Triin Jäädmaa, environmental lawyer
198. Maaja Mäll, NGO Loomus
199. Steffen Holter, Research Fellow, NYU
200. Ester Kangur, Publishing Specialist, Art Museum of Estonia; member of Rapla County Nature Conservation NGO
201. Mariann Rückenber, writer
202. Tiina Georg, student, NGO Roheline Pärnumaa
203. Anastassia Argent, registered nurse
204. Urmo Raus, artist
205. Külli Jacobson, mathematics teacher at Väraska Gümnaasium, entrepreneur OÜ Kagu Kudujad, nature protection activist MTÜ Tänu Loodusele
206. Ragne Pajo, Psy.D., licensed psychologist and clinic co-owner

207. Katerina Malat, Psy.D., licensed psychologist and clinic co-owner
208. Herdis Elmend, connected with nature
209. Dagmar Nurges, nature enthusiast
210. Marlen Laanep, biology student, musician, activist
211. Raul Steinberg, student
212. Dorothy Harriet Purre, financial technology advisor
213. Margus Ellermaa, ornithologist
214. Annaliisa Asveit, translator, musician
215. Anna Mari Liivrand, artist
216. Katriin Kütt, social protection MA, museum pedagogue and a sexual education activist
217. Elise Martin, student
218. Elvis Laur, DJ
219. Margit Lõhmus, artist, writer
220. Meelis Lukats, artist
221. Alar Adamson, farmer
222. Johanna Lehtmets, Sveriges Lantbruksuniversitet
223. Eero Barndök, artist
224. Kalli Pikas, artist
225. Peeter Liinsoo, forest expert, entrepreneur
226. Tiina Pikas, artistic director of a dance studio
227. Ülle Gaver, entrepreneur (housing), member of the Save Estonia's Forests non-profit
228. Urmas Vürst, beef cattle farmer
229. Marko Tumanov, member of Save Estonia's Forests
230. Hele Kängsepp, environmental activist
231. Deivi Org, artist, activist
232. Kätlin Tamm, NGO Roheline Läänemaa
233. Jekaterina Kordas, actress
234. Rea Raus, senior researcher, Chairman of the Board, Statera Research and Practice Center for Sustainability and Regional Development.
235. Antti Mäss, location sound recordist for AV productions
236. Riina Georg, teacher
237. Aivar Georg, psychologist
238. Tiiu-Liina Knaps, doctor
239. Eva Loskit, family doctor
240. Uku Loskit, software developer
241. [REDACTED ON REQUEST]
242. Kaia Otstak, artist, philosophy MA
243. Pille Rückenber, teacher
244. Inge Talts, doctor, MotB of the non-profit "Hiiu Tuul" ("Wind of the island Hiiumaa")
245. Pärt Loskit, entrepreneur
246. Arvi Sepp, Association to protect the sacred natural site of Paluküla



247. Indrek Laanetu, a representative of the Seto minority nation
248. Janis Alver, janitor
249. Triin Lepp, dentist
250. Ivo Uukkivi, actor
251. Merike Lillenberg, scientist, PhD (environmental protection), lecturer in EMÜ
252. Indrek Lillenberg, horticulture student at EMÜ
253. Hendrik Lillenberg, landscape builder
254. Raine Lindepuu, Gaia school teacher
255. Anne Arold, freelancer translator
256. Jana Soans, freelancer, artist
257. Arno Undrits, forester
258. Farištamo Eller, musician, teacher, activist
259. Robert Kulakovski, production worker
260. Maarika Kuhlberg, procurement manager, activist
261. Helle Talts, friend of nature
262. Katrin Ilison, a worshipper of forest and living nature
263. Sirje Luck , teacher and support worker
264. Joanna Ellmann, poet
265. Mart Niklus, zoologist, freedom fighter
266. Terje Hannus, librarian
267. Colin Luck, farmer
268. Marika Tamm, friend of nature
269. Anu Tähemaa, friend of nature
270. Laidi Kivist, friend of nature
271. Rainis Koovit, friend of nature
272. Maire Kuldmets, tailor
273. Laur Tooming, software developer
274. Rauno Rööpson, friend of nature
275. Teelia Rööpson, friend of nature
276. Eleri Lopp-Valdma, Kose municipality nature society NGO, member of the board
277. Mihkel Kunnus, Estonian University of Life Sciences, lecturer of Environmental Ethics and Philosophy
278. Reet Karro, forest bathing and nature enthusiast, freelance translator, adult educator and certified breathwork therapist
279. Tanel Joamets, pianist, teacher
280. Sille Teesalu, biologist, farmer
281. Elis Moormaa, friend of nature
282. Henri Kivist, entrepreneur
283. Kalev Kuldmets, builder
284. Mirjam Karro, personal assistant, friend of nature

285. Virge Joamets, musicologist, journalist, editor.
286. Kairi Rebane, freelancer, friend of nature
287. Marianna Soosaar, kindergarten teacher assistant
288. Eda Lahtmäe, Entrepreneur, Lifelong friend of nature.
289. Lauri Lahtmäe, Entrepreneur, Forest owner, Lifelong friend of nature.
290. Karin-Liis Lahtmäe, Coordinator of the EU Sustainable Energy Week, European Commission.
291. Eva-Laura Lahtmäe, Lifelong friend of nature.
292. Mai Krull, pensioner
293. Aleksander Laane, Chairman of the council of the Estonian Green Party, journalist
294. Lauri Takk, Monitoring Operator, founding member of commercial association Forestly
295. Helina Tilk, artist, educator
296. Vlad Üksarv, taxi driver
297. Lia Loskit, friend of nature, pensioner
298. Liis Viira, composer, artist, harpist
299. Helena Trei, runo singer
300. Mati Rampe, miner
301. Olev-Andres Tinn, Member of the Board, Estonian Greens
302. Madli Lippur, writer
303. Kertu Vahtra, CEO
304. Züleyxa Izmailova, environmentalist, Estonian Greens
305. Marko Kaasik, Party Estonian Greens (deputy chairman), environmental physicist, Ph.D.
306. Cornelia Kotto, freelance artist and nature guide
307. Terje Kivist, student ( social sciences)
308. Madis Raudpuu, fish processing worker and nature lover
309. Veljo Värk, composer
310. Lilian Reemets pensioner,forest lover
311. Joonas Laks, Young Greens Leader
312. Miimu Turi, farmer
313. Külli Piir, veterinarian
- 314.