

PoS Commissioner's meeting, Nov 17, 2020, Public Comment by Bernedine Lund, resident of Federal Way, member of Quiet Skies of Puget Sound and volunteer for 350 Seattle = aviation group

The PoS Special Study session on Biofuels gave a good introduction to biofuels, and described how the PoS hopes to use 10% biofuels for all aviation by 2028 as a step toward lower carbon emissions. Since listening to the study session, I've been trying to find more information about use of biofuels and how they can reduce the carbon released into the atmosphere. It was surprising to learn that the carbon neutral idea of biofuels comes from the life-cycle analysis (LCA) of the biomass used for the biofuels. This means that it can be about 50 years before the amount carbon emitted by the biofuel will be sequestered into other trees as they grow.

A Columbia University blog has an article updated in 2016 asking 'Is Biomass Really Renewable?.' There are several comments about the article giving more detail and links to more information, such as a blog from Columbia University [1]. Other organizations such as Stay Grounded and Partnership for Policy Integrity (PFPI) [2] talk about the issues around use of biomass for biofuels.

I have several major concerns about biomass and its use for biofuels. Both the Stay Grounded and PFPI mention concerns about other countries misusing their forests for biofuels, leading to a variety of problems, such as destroying the forests, compacting soil with heavy equipment, destroying the variety of plant and animal life, etc. Carol Sim from WSU said there would be laws against misuses; it seems more likely that by the time someone is found damaging a forest, it will take generations to repair the damage.

Another issue is that using biofuels gives a false sense of helping the environment. There is not enough time to wait for biofuels to be better produced or to improve alternative energy sources for aircraft. When Carol Sim from WSU spoke with Sara Shifley and me, she agreed that there were many issues that still needed to be worked out (and that I was being too negative). I was probably too direct with my skepticism. The primary way to reduce airline emissions is to reduce the number of flights. This may seem too difficult – until you remember that only 20% of the world population flies but everyone suffers from the effects of climate change.

I really want to believe that biofuels could be the answer, even if they do not reduce the noise from airflights. Having the president of Greenpeace and Bill Gates both interested in the issue, I was ready to believe that they can be helpful. Can you point me to literature or information that addresses the forest destruction and how you feel it is a good solution for aviation reducing emissions?.

[1] - (<https://blogs.ei.columbia.edu/2011/08/18/is-biomassreallyrenewable/#:~:text=Biomass%20is%20considered%20a%20renewable,released%20back%20into%20the%20atmosphere>)

[2] - (<http://www.pfpi.net/biomass-basics-2>)