

The Environmental Protection Information Center posted on their website in July, 2020 a sample letter addressed to the Mendocino County Air Quality Management District regarding the Mendocino Forest Products pellet facility located in Calpella, CA.

Mendocino Forest Products found a number of comments that would benefit from additional correction, clarification or commentary which are presented on the right side of the page in green italics.

Substantial factual information on Mendocino and Humboldt Redwood forests and its practices are available at www.MendoCo.com. Wherever possible we have provided direct links to specific material on our website to help the readers have easy access.

<p style="text-align: center;">Text of Press Release</p> <p><i>Text of article begins below, spaces placed to allow facts to line up with text of article.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Facts from Mendocino Forest Products</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">[BEGINNING OF LETTER]</p> <p>To the Mendocino County Air Quality Management District:</p> <p>I am requesting the suspension of facility operations at the Mendocino Forest Products Wood Pellet Production Plant. One reason is the heightened dangers local communities are already experiencing due to the covid pandemic, and there has been an inadequate environmental review in locating the plant in a residential/agricultural neighborhood.</p> <p>I have driven by that plant many times on my way to and from Willits, and often wondered what the gigantic plume of smoke was sending into the air. Now I have learned: polluting particulate matter.</p> <p>The Wood Pellet Production Plant has been polluting the community and threatening public health. I have learned that wood pellet production releases heavy amounts of harmful pollutants including: Carbon monoxide; nitrogen oxide; Greenhouse gasses; Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC's); fine particulate matter at the 2.5 level; acetaldehyde; formaldehyde and methanol. Breathing the pollutants emitted from</p> <p style="text-align: center;">[LETTER CONTINUES BELOW]</p>	<p>The plume at the pellet facility is water vapor. The plume is monitored and tested and has been found to be in compliance Mendocino County Air Quality Management District (MCAQMD) rules and regulations. Weekly reports are sent to the MCAQMD to ensure this compliance continues.</p> <p>The MCAQMD installed monitoring technology near the Calpella Elementary School for nearly eight (8) months. The results of this totally independent monitoring, performed by the MCAQMD, confirmed the lack of impacts to air quality at this location</p>

wood pellet production plants can trigger a variety of health problems particularly to children, the elderly and people of all ages who have lung diseases such as asthma.

Many nearby communities are threatened. The Mendocino Wood Pellet Production Plant is located only a mile from the Reservation of the Coyote Valley Band of Pomo Indians and is in the same valley as the Redwood Valley Band of Pomo Indians and is situated a block from the Consolidated Tribal Health Project (CTHP) Clinic, a health clinic which serves 9 Tribes and a few blocks away from a public and private school. Literally downstream from the plant is a working class neighborhood consisting mostly of Hispanic residents and families.

Since the Wood Pellet Production Plant's opening in November 2019, it has been emitting harmful pollutant matter into the atmosphere, endangering the respiratory health of the community. On several occasions, the Mendocino County Air Quality Management District found the Plant emitting pollutants in violation of its operating permit. Community members have addressed this threat to public health to the Mendocino Board of Supervisors, and have presented scientific research proving the linkage between toxic air pollution from wood pellet plants leading to irreversible damage to lung health.

In this time of a Covid pandemic, allowing the plant to continue operations and release pollutants that increase the threat of respiratory and cardiovascular ailments is misguided and a danger to the citizens of this county. A recent Harvard Public Health School study has concluded that exposure to pollution greatly increases the potential of death by Covid.

From research into the public record of the County's approval process for the plant's construction we have found that the facility's potential negative health impacts were never evaluated through a proper environmental review process and we are outraged at the lack of transparency, public process and notification regarding the plant's violations.

[LETTER CONTINUES BELOW]

The MCAQMD installed monitoring technology near the Calpella Elementary School for nearly eight (8) months. The results of this totally independent monitoring, performed by the MCAQMD, confirmed the lack of impacts to air quality at this location

Mendocino Forest Products (MFP) obtained an Authority To Construct permit from the MCAQMD to construct the pellet facility. After construction, during normal tuning and testing, there were difficulties meeting the emission limits of the permit so the facility voluntarily reduced production to always remain below allowable emission limits . MFP and MCAQMD agreed to this while MFP invested in additional control technology and demonstrated the ability to operate consistently below allowable limits. This has been completed. Tests reveal that allowable emissions limits are now being met at full production.

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In light of the fact that the plant's emissions pose a threat to the health of nearby residents (especially sensitive receptors) violations of its permits, and the lack of a proper environmental and public review, we the undersigned organizations and concerned residents of Mendocino County, are calling for the suspension of facility operations at the plant especially during the pandemic. In fact, the Mendocino Forest Products' Wood Pellet Production Plant should cease operations immediately and should not be allowed to re-open unless and until a thorough environmental review process with robust civic engagement opportunities concludes the facility's emissions are safe in its current location.

[END OF LETTER]

Significant investments in control technology have been completed at the pellet plant to ensure full compliance with MCAQMD rules and regulations. Weekly reports are sent to the MCAQMD to ensure this compliance continues.