

Tradewinds blow ill

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I'd like to respond to the article on HELCO and renewable energy in the July 14 Tribune-Herald.

First, Tradewinds Forest Products proposes to put their power plant not on the "outskirts of Ookala," as stated in the article, but right in the middle of our residential community, literally across the street from the majority of homes.

Next, when HELCO talks about "renewable energy," the public is led to believe the energy is "clean and green." But biomass energy is NOT clean and green, it's a smokestack industry with toxic emissions that fall under state and federal government regulation.

In the article, Mr. Bryan states that he "can't build without an air permit in hand," and that "it's on its way to us, and we expect to see something here shortly."

Tradewinds' draft permit is currently being reviewed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency due to a request that I filed in February asking for an objection. My request is based on the expert analysis of several environmental and mechanical engineers that our community group, Protect Ookala, hired to review the draft permit. Without exception, every single expert found serious flaws in the emissions data. They also had concerns about the air control technology and weak monitoring system that Tradewinds has proposed to use.

The EPA does not rush its decisions, so regardless of what Mr. Bryan says, his air permit is a long way from resolution.

I'd also like to respond to Mr. Bryan's statements about the supply of fuel for the three proposed biomass plants. In the article, he states that the other two ventures "won't be competing for our fuel, because our fuel is under contract."

But the only contract Tradewinds currently has for fuel is a seven-year-old state lease license at Waiakea Timber Management Area, some 40 miles south of Ookala. That contract, which is nearing its end, states that the veneer and power plant construction

must be completed by this July 1, 2008, with a drop-dead completion date of January 2009.

Given that Tradewinds doesn't even have its first permit, the Waiakea timber should be put out to bid again in 2009. So in reality, there is no secured fuel source for Tradewinds.

Mr. Bryan has continually given out misinformation about his project to the press, to our elected officials, and to the public, but our community will continue to hold him accountable. HELCO and the Public Utility Commission should do the same.

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Ookala

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