



*The Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League supports efforts to develop and promote clean alternatives to the current system of utility-controlled coal and nuclear production of electricity in North Carolina. But the NC GreenPower program will do little to encourage such alternatives. In fact, by funding unsustainable fuel resources, NC GreenPower hinders effective steps that could be taken now to achieve clean energy.*

## A Good Idea Gone Bad

Two years ago many environmental organizations including BREDL participated in the development of an NC GreenPower program. But consensus among environmental groups and industry, utilities, and state regulators became impossible, and a two-product program was developed. The result? A dirty product for residential consumers and an even dirtier and more damaging product for large power users.

## Where Would Your GreenPower Dollars Go?

The NC GreenPower program approved by the North Carolina Utilities Commission for residential customers permits the electricity provider to charge an additional \$4.00 per 100 kilowatt hours per month which will be shared among the producers. Eighty five percent, \$3.40 of the \$4.00, will go to new landfill gas and animal waste facilities. Only 60 cents of the \$4.00 premium will go to new producers of solar and wind energy. So, 15% of NC GreenPower funds will be for renewable energy sources and 85% would go for new facilities to burn fuel from garbage in landfills or the waste produced in hog factories. Garbage and animal wastes are neither green nor clean. Solar and wind represent the clean energy future but instead of investing in these technologies, NC GreenPower invests in wastes. These misplaced priorities result in a fatally flawed program for residential consumers.

The commercial product is far worse at \$250.00 per 10,000 kwh per month. Not only does this program pay a premium for current production already on the grid, it expands fuel resources to forests and power generation to incineration. This is the "anything but coal and nuclear" program. It is both unsustainable in fuel sources and far more damaging to North Carolina's air, water and forests. Solar and wind share 4% of this program; 96% goes to animal waste, landfills, dams and incineration.

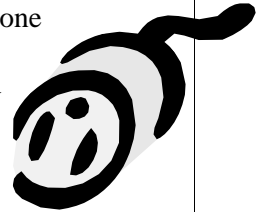
## What Can One Person Do?

Conservation is missing from the NC GreenPower program. The greenest electricity is the electricity not generated and consumed. Until North Carolina has a program that truly promotes clean energy, consumers can make a bigger difference by investing in energy efficient appliances, installing insulation and buying compact fluorescent light bulbs.

# **GREEN POWER OR ZERO WASTE IS GARBAGE REALLY A RENEWABLE RESOURCE?**

## **LANDFILL GAS IS A PROBLEM**

Methane, contaminated with a variety of toxics such as mercury, is explosive and has to be controlled to reduce the risk of potential explosions. It is also a powerful greenhouse gas that traps heat in the atmosphere at 20 times the rate of carbon dioxide. The EPA lists landfills as the number one source of methane emissions in the United States contributing 3.5% of the 1998 total greenhouse gases in the United States (Inventory of U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks: 1990-1998, April 2000). Actually, the total is far higher because the EPA assumed that 75% of the methane was captured by landfill gas collection systems. But much of the methane escapes either before collection systems are installed, after they are abandoned, or from landfills exempt from regulation, reducing the potential impact of landfill gas burning on global warming.



## **GARBAGE GOES IN; GAS COMES OUT**

Methane is created in landfills by burying organic wastes. These wastes constitute the fuel that the NC GreenPower program defines as "renewable". Paper (forest products), food wastes and other organic materials are the feedstock that form methane through anaerobic decomposition. Burying organic waste creates the conditions necessary for landfill gas generation.

## **LANDFILL GAS IS NOT GREENPOWER**

NC Greenpower promises the development of solar and wind but can only target 15% for retail customers after three years. In the meantime, landfill gas will constitute a large portion of the program and there is no guarantee of future solar and wind generation. The only guarantee is for landfill gas, animal waste and small hydro projects.

## **ZERO WASTE, ZERO POLLUTION**

Zero Waste not only saves the energy, it avoids the pollution created by disposing of waste. Waste reduction saves far more energy than will be generated by landfill gas from organic waste.

## **UNPLUG THE SUBSIDY FOR WASTE!**

Landfill owners and operators should be responsible for controlling their emissions and not subsidized with energy premiums paid by customers expecting green power. The option to sell electricity from landfill gas already exists and companies can do that without additional subsidies from NC GreenPower consumers.



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Resources on the web:

Grassroots Recycling Network: [www.GRRN.org](http://www.GRRN.org) Earth Track, Inc.: [www.earthtrack.net](http://www.earthtrack.net)  
Institute for Local Self Reliance: [www.ILSR.org](http://www.ILSR.org) Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League: [www.BREDL.org](http://www.BREDL.org)

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