



COUNTY OF YOLO
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**Environmental Protection Investigation Uncovers Falsified Records and
Disposal of Hazardous Waste on Agricultural Lands**

Woodland, CA – May 2, 2017 – Yolo County District Attorney Jeff Reisig announced that Yolo County Superior Court Judge Samuel McAdam ordered Woodland Biomass Power to pay \$4.22 million for penalties, costs, and remediation, as a result of a civil settlement reached in an environmental protection action filed in Yolo County by the District Attorneys of Yolo, Solano and San Joaquin counties.

Woodland Biomass Power operates a biomass facility in Woodland that burns wood fuel to produce electricity, and, in the process, generates ash. For years, Woodland Biomass Power claimed its ash was non-hazardous. This claim, however, was supported with faulty methods, and at times, falsified summaries of the test results for its ash. The company’s own test results have shown that much of its ash had elevated levels of dioxins and constituted hazardous waste because of high levels of pH and high concentrations of contaminants like arsenic, lead, and copper. Woodland Biomass Power also provided these falsified records to various governmental entities, individuals, and companies.

During the years it relied on falsified test-result summaries, Woodland Biomass Power caused tens of thousands of tons of ash—some of which was hazardous waste—to be disposed of on properties not authorized to receive hazardous waste, including agricultural lands in Yolo County. At least one location was within 1000 feet of the City of Davis.

“As the Yolo County Public Health Officer and a Yolo County resident, I am thankful for the great work of the District Attorney’s office and other experts involved in this case,” said Yolo County Health Officer Ronald W. Chapman, MD, MPH. “When we hear about an environmental contamination we immediately worry about our health and that of our family and friends. After consultation with the Department of Toxic Substances Control and the Yolo-Solano Air Quality Management District, I believe the health risk to myself, my family and my friends from these past practices is very low regarding soil contaminations. Regarding air contamination, we do not have information to assess public health risk. Air sampling was not done during the use of the contaminated material. Going forward, I feel assured measures are being put in place to eliminate future risk.”

“The investigation into the unlawful hazardous-waste disposal activity in this case was extremely complex and time consuming, taking many years to complete. The conduct being perpetrated by the

defendant here might have easily gone undetected in many jurisdictions. Fortunately, Yolo County has remained steadfastly committed to environmental investigations like this which uncovered the fraud and

the hazardous dumping practice and brought it to a stop,” said District Attorney Reisig. “Companies like Woodland Biomass Power need to be held accountable to ensure that hazardous waste is disposed of safely and responsibly.”

The District Attorney’s Office received significant assistance in this investigation from the California Department of Toxic Substances Control, Yolo County Environmental Health Department, and Yolo-Solano Air Quality Management District. Other District Attorneys’ Offices throughout the state also assisted in the investigation.

Under the settlement, Woodland Biomass Power must pay \$2.12 million in civil penalties, \$850,000 to reimburse for the costs of investigation, and over \$1.25 million to remediate the one site where testing has indicated hazardous materials are present in concentrations that exceed regulatory thresholds. The company must also implement improved ash-management procedures designed to prevent future violations of hazardous-waste laws.

Woodland Biomass Power has been cooperative in the investigation since the prosecution team discovered the fraud in early 2016 and, since that time, the company has re-evaluated its plant operations and implemented numerous improvements to its ash management practices.

For more detailed case information, including court filings, visit www.Yoloda.org

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