



**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR**

CHRISTOPHER T. SUNUNU
Governor

August 18, 2023

Governor's Veto Message Regarding House Bill 142

By the authority vested in me, pursuant to part II, Article 44 of the New Hampshire Constitution, on August 18, 2023, I have vetoed House Bill 142, relative to the operation of the Burgess Biopower plant.

New Hampshire ratepayers have been taken for over \$200 million in order to subsidize the Burgess Biomass Plant in Berlin, NH. Enough is enough.

New Hampshire has a strong economy and record low unemployment rate, in part because we realize that government should limit subsidies, taxes, and mandates. There are countless economic opportunities in the state that are sustainable without substantial government subsidization or bailouts. The Power Purchase Agreement with Burgess Biopower is a great example of what can go wrong when the good intentions of a sympathetic government get exploited and abused by opportunists in the private sector.

The Burgess Biopower plant has been enormously expensive for New Hampshire ratepayers. After accounting for overmarket energy costs and Renewable Energy Certificate costs, Burgess Biopower has received over \$200 million in subsidies since 2014. \$200 million to support fewer than 40 full time jobs! All of these overmarket costs are paid by approximately 530,000 Eversource customers, forcing those families and businesses to bear additional unnecessary financial burden on top of already historically high electric bills.

We have given considerable time to Burgess Biopower to find a long-term solution. In June of 2018, I signed Senate Bill 577 to provide a bridge to financial sustainability for Burgess Biopower, continuing the subsidies on the promise from their CEO that they could find a stable financial model that did not require continuous subsidies. **They failed.** Again in 2022, I signed a bill to continue that suspension for another year with the expectation a sustainable solution would be found. **Again, they failed.** It has now been 5 years since Senate Bill 577 was signed and the best idea brought forward to keep the plant going is to ask the state to forgive the approximately \$70 million that the plant owes back to ratepayers. Time and again the Burgess management and ownership team has made bad promise after bad promise to our elected officials. The only thing we have to show for it are more empty promises and false hope to the City of Berlin.

To sign this bill would continue to allow Burgess Biopower to collect millions of dollars in ratepayer subsidies every month with no hope of a solution and wipe out their debt obligation to our ratepayers. After a decade of continuous government support with nothing to show for it, such an ask is unconscionable. To sign this bill would violate my obligation to protect the consumers of New Hampshire from perpetual adverse financial investments. This company has failed the City of Berlin, the region, and the ratepayers of New Hampshire. Enough is Enough!

For the reasons stated above, I have vetoed House Bill 142.

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher T. Sununu
Governor