# Drax AGM cut short amid protests over biomass and environmental justice



The owner of the Drax power plant cancelled its annual shareholder meeting following a confrontation with activists protesting against the company’s practice of burning trees for electricity generation. The incident took place on Thursday at a venue in Paternoster Square, London, where between 10 and 20 activists were forcibly removed after they challenged the board of the FTSE 250 energy company regarding its use of woody biomass at the North Yorkshire facility.

The protest was organized by groups alleging that Drax's activities have contributed to air pollution in low-income Black communities in the United States, where the company operates biomass pellet production facilities. Activists claim that Drax has benefited from billions in renewable energy subsidies while contributing to environmental harm, leading to a significant backlash from green organisations.

Drax maintains that the wood it uses is sustainably sourced; however, the company faced scrutiny last year when it was fined £25 million by the energy regulator for submitting inaccurate data regarding the sourcing of its pellets. This scrutiny has intensified calls for a reassessment of the company’s practices in the context of renewable energy claims.

The annual general meeting (AGM) was abruptly concluded around 11:30 a.m., before many shareholders had the opportunity to voice their concerns to the board. A spokesperson for Drax cited “threatening behaviour” from activists as the reason for shutting down the meeting, stating, “Unfortunately, activists aggressively disrupted the Q+A on multiple occasions. As a result of this threatening behaviour, and to protect the safety of our shareholders and staff, our chair made the decision to conclude the meeting early.”

However, several attendees disputed this account, including shareholders who felt the decision was an attempt to silence dissent rather than a necessary safety measure. Krystal Martin, an environmental activist who travelled from Gloster, Mississippi, expressed her frustration at being barred from entering the venue with her laptop and missing the start of the meeting. She commented, “It was an intentional and deliberate attempt to silence our voice. I know I stand out – I’m a Black girl from Mississippi – so it felt like their actions were deliberate.”

Another campaigner, Katherine Hegland, also from Mississippi, articulated her disappointment in being treated with suspicion, claiming she was initially denied entry because she was carrying an iPad. She stated, “It was a non-violent protest. There was no reason to close the meeting. There was no way that anyone could feel that they were not safe.”

The Guardian reports that the atmosphere at the AGM was tense, reflecting the growing divide between corporate interests and activist concerns regarding sustainability and environmental justice. As the debate surrounding biomass energy continues, Drax remains at the centre of this contentious dialogue, with both critics and supporters closely watching the company's next steps.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.the-independent.com/business/climate-protesters-target-bp-and-drax-shareholder-meetings-b2534878.html> - This article details the protest at Drax's Annual General Meeting (AGM) in London, where activists challenged the company's use of woody biomass for electricity generation, leading to the meeting's abrupt conclusion.
* <https://www.standard.co.uk/business/business-news/climate-protesters-target-bp-and-drax-shareholder-meetings-b1153904.html> - The piece reports on the confrontation between activists and Drax's board during the AGM, highlighting the activists' claims that Drax's biomass practices contribute to environmental harm and air pollution in low-income Black communities in the U.S.
* <https://www.ft.com/content/6c9e5d0e-4e7a-4e9d-bae7-11069a6bd238> - This article discusses the controversy surrounding Drax's classification as a renewable energy source, noting that burning wood pellets may emit more CO₂ per unit of energy than coal, and the company's reliance on government subsidies despite environmental concerns.
* <https://www.ft.com/content/19a3e3b0-c750-475f-9ca2-185e6868bd69> - The report covers the settlement of a whistleblower case against Drax, where the former head of public affairs alleged unfair dismissal after raising concerns about the company's biomass sourcing practices, leading to a £25 million penalty for misreporting biomass data.
* <https://www.standard.co.uk/business/business-news/climate-protesters-target-bp-and-drax-shareholder-meetings-b1153904.html> - This article highlights the tense atmosphere at Drax's AGM, reflecting the growing divide between corporate interests and activist concerns regarding sustainability and environmental justice, with both critics and supporters closely watching the company's next steps.
* <https://www.standard.co.uk/business/business-news/climate-protesters-target-bp-and-drax-shareholder-meetings-b1153904.html> - The piece reports on the protest at Drax's AGM, where activists alleged that the company's biomass operations have led to environmental harm and air pollution in low-income Black communities in the U.S., contributing to a significant backlash from green organizations.
* <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2025/may/01/drax-abandons-uk-shareholder-agm-after-protest-by-environmental-activists> - Please view link - unable to able to access data