# Drax power station: scandal raises doubts over Labour's green energy policies



The Drax power station, once a crown jewel in North Yorkshire’s energy landscape, now stands at the epicentre of a growing scandal that raises serious questions about the integrity of the Labour government's green energy policies. Operational since 1974, Drax has evolved from a coal-dependent behemoth to a facility claiming to produce 'renewable' energy through the use of biomass, or processed wood pellets, a transformation politically convenient to those seeking to diversify energy sources post-Brexit. However, this pivot has sparked a fierce backlash against what many are calling a ‘great green hoax’ — the reality starkly contradicting the government's green credentials.

Critics are increasingly vocal about the staggering £869 million in subsidies received by Drax over the past year, effectively costing the average UK household an estimated £10 on their energy bills. As Labour takes the helm, families are left questioning why taxpayer money is being funneled into an operation that reported £850 million in profits last year, illustrating a glaring disconnect between government policies and public welfare. Sceptics argue that such funding should not bolster a company whose operations—with their reliance on unsustainable wood sources—are now under intense scrutiny and could be contributing significantly to carbon emissions.

The drama intensified with a legal case at the London Central Employment Tribunal featuring Rowaa Ahmar, a former civil servant and head of public affairs at Drax, who claims she was dismissed for blowing the whistle on misleading communications regarding the so-called sustainability of Drax's biomass fuel. The tribunal's revelations—even sensational due to the implications of a BBC Panorama documentary—suggest that Drax has been sourcing wood from ancient primary forests in Canada, contradicting their assertions of harmless sourcing. If this is indeed the case, it reflects badly not just on Drax but also on the Labour administration that has allowed such misleading practices to go unchecked.

Ahmar alleges in her testimony that the company’s executives were panicking in the wake of negative press, and internal communications hinted at knowledge of unsustainable practices that are egregiously at odds with the government’s supposed commitments to environmental stewardship. That Drax is permitted to source 30% of its wood from unsustainable sources underlines the failure of robust regulatory oversight by the Labour government, which should be ensuring accountability among energy providers.

As the tribunal concluded with an undisclosed settlement between the two parties, vital questions surrounding corporate transparency in the UK’s renewable energy sector remain unresolved. Drax's £25 million fine from Ofgem for technical breaches signals merely a slap on the wrist rather than the firm action needed to restore public confidence.

The fallout from this ongoing saga raises serious doubts about the credibility of the Labour government’s energy policies. With their leadership now in place, one must consider whether this administration remains committed to genuine sustainability or is merely treating green energy as a profitable venture to appease public opinion while neglecting operational integrity.

Drax's situation is a microcosm of broader failures in the UK's energy landscape that demand urgent attention. As the public prepares to bear the financial brunt of these questionable practices, the promise of a greener future grows increasingly obscured by corporate interests and governmental complacency.

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

## References

* <https://sustainabilitymag.com/articles/the-story-behind-drax-groups-wood-sourcing-controversy> - This article supports the claim that Drax Group has been involved in controversies surrounding the sourcing of wood from unsustainable sources, including primary and old-growth forests in Canada, which contradicts its sustainability claims. It also mentions the significant financial subsidies Drax has received from the UK government.
* <https://earthjustice.org/experts/jen-powis/the-long-shadow-of-drax-a-power-company-masquerading-as-green> - This article highlights Drax's role in the wood-pellet industry and its environmental impacts, including pollution in U.S. communities. It also critiques the labeling of biomass energy as 'renewable,' aligning with criticisms of Drax's green credentials.
* <https://www.wrm.org.uy/bulletin-articles/the-green-energy-scandal-drax-receives-subsidies-for-burning-forests> - This article discusses how Drax receives subsidies by burning wood pellets, labeled as 'carbon neutral.' It also points out the problematic nature of Drax's partnership with C-Zero for BECCS technology, which is misleadingly presented as 'carbon negative.'
* <https://www.drax.com/> - This is Drax's official website, which details its energy production and sustainability efforts, providing a contrast to criticisms regarding its practices and environmental impact.
* <https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/news-and-views/drax-fined-%C2%A325-million-due-inaccurate-reporting> - This article from Ofgem supports the claim that Drax faced a £25 million fine for technical breaches, related to inaccurate reporting, which is seen by many as insufficient to address the broader issues of transparency and accountability.