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Locals oppose biomass plant

POST REPORTERS

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» About 500 people in Udon Thani's Nong Han district yesterday gathered to oppose plans for a biomass-fired power plant on environmental grounds.

Amporn Saengyotha, a 64-year-old resident of Ban Nong Kung, said residents had put up with the foul smell from a para rubber factory and they did not want any further health risks from the proposed biomass-fired power plant.

She said that she had felt relieved when a nearby recycling factory was closed only to find out that another project was coming and the foul smell from the rubber factory would not be addressed.

"I'm concerned about the children and don't want any more [pollution]. It's already too much for the town," she said.

The project site is said to be 200 metres from Ban Pa Kao school in tambon Phak

Top. The facility would generate 20 megawatts of electricity.

Khamplai Khampaengrat, a local leader, said yesterday the group wanted the planned July 10-12 public hearing on the environmental impact assessment postponed. He said public forums should have been held to explain the project to the community before the hearing was organised.

Deputy governor Thanapol Chantaramimi yesterday moved to allay concerns about a lack of transparency, saying local participation was a must.

Meanwhile, in Pattani's Yarang district, about 500 employees of a local electricity office yesterday kicked off a campaign to protest against the planned privatisation of an electricity authority in the deep South.

The protest followed reports that the power authority for the three southernmost provinces could be privatised to stabilise energy for local consumption.