

## Chirk factory backing power station subsidy protests

Published date: 26 October 2010 | Published by: Claire Gallagher



**MORE than 600 workers at Kronospan in Chirk will stage a two hour protest on Friday.**

Production at the wood panel factory will stop between 11am and 1pm as workers down tools because they fear for their jobs.

Concerns have been raised because licensed electricity providers in the UK are being paid extra to generate more electricity from renewable sources such as virgin wood.

Workers at Kronospan support the use of burning recycled wood but feel burning virgin wood could have an impact on the environment.

They also fear it could mean a shortage of wood which could affect the workload at the wood panel factory.

On Friday workers at Kronospan are expected to line the driveway leading to the factory with banners to protest the moves.

Clwyd South MP Susan Elan Jones and AM Mark Isherwood are set to attend as well as Brian Apsley from the Unite union and the director general of the Wood Panel Industries Federation (WPIF) Alastair Kerr.

Gavin Adkins, director of Kronospan, said: "Paying subsidies to burn virgin timber rather than manufacture with it damages wealth creation, the economy and the environment. "It's pushing up prices, creating a shortage in raw material and inevitably threatens millions of jobs.

"To protect the economy, environment and jobs, we felt it was absolutely vital to back this European Day of Action and help reverse the unintended consequences of this short-sighted policy."

Workers at Kronospan are among thousands of others across Europe who will be protesting against the same issue.

A statement from the company added: "If this situation continues there will be a potential shortfall, in Europe alone by the year 2020 due to biomass demand, according to a United Nations report. "The pressure on supply directly threatens not only Europe's wood panel manufacturing industry but also all its associated customers, from furniture makers to the construction industry.

## The Leader 26.10.10

“The wood working industries in Europe have a turnover in excess of £270 billion providing 2.4 million jobs.

“The industry creates 25 times more employment and ten times more wealth creation than biomass energy generation, according to global analysts Poyry.

“Kronospan’s symbolic shutdown supports the European Panel Federation’s Day of Action, which will bring the European industry to a standstill on October 29.”

Kronospan UK employs more than 600 people, 90 per cent of whom live within 10 miles of its North Wales site.