

バイオマス燃料のための森林利用に関する書簡（仮訳）

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バイデン大統領殿、フォン・デア・ライエン欧州委員会委員長殿、ミシェル欧州理事会議長殿、菅総理大臣殿、文大統領殿

下記に署名した科学者及び経済学者は、米国、欧州連合、日本及び韓国における、2050年までにカーボンニュートラルを達成するという意欲的な目標の発表に対して賞賛の意を表したい。この目標を達成し、同時に世界的な生物多様性の危機に対処する上で鍵となる手段は、森林の保全と再生である。エネルギー生産において、化石燃料から木質燃料への移行が進むことで、気候変動における目標を阻み、生物多様性を世界規模で悪化させることのないよう、強く要望する。

数十年に渡り、紙及び木材製品の製造者は、廃棄物処理の過程で副産物として発電及び熱利用を行ってきた。その過程において木材の追加伐採は不要である。しかし近年では、バイオマス燃料のために樹木全体を切り倒す、または幹材の大部分を転用するという誤った動きが見られ、結果として森林に固定されるはずだった炭素が放出されている。

このような追加伐採は、炭素排出量の大きな初期増加を引き起こし、結果として「炭素債務」が発生する。炭素債務は、引き続きバイオマス燃料のためにより多くの樹木が伐採されることで増え続ける。森林の再生や化石燃料からの移行によって、この債務はいずれ清算可能かもしれないが、木々の再生には時間がかかり、世界の気候変動の解決には間に合わない。木材の燃料利用は、数十年から数世紀に渡り温暖化を進行させると数多くの研究が示しており、この状況は木材が石炭、石油又は天然ガスに取って代わったとしても当てはまる。

その理由は考えるまでもないだろう。森林は炭素を蓄積する一乾燥材の重さの約半分は炭素である。通常、木を伐採し燃焼する際には、伐採された木の生きた木材部分のほとんど（多くの場合半分以上）が、エネルギーを供給することなく伐採時や加工時に失われ、化石燃料を代替することもなく大気中の炭素量を増加させている。また、木材の燃料利用は炭素効率が悪く、エネルギー生産のために燃やされる木材は、化石燃料を使用する場合よりも多くの炭素を排出する。概して、1キロワット時の発電又は発熱において、木材を使用する場合に初期段階で大気中に放出される炭素量は、化石燃料を使用する場合に比べ2倍から3倍の量になりうる。

今後数十年間に渡る地球温暖化の進行は危険である。これは、今後数十年間での森林火災の増加、海面の更なる上昇及び猛暑期間の延長による直接的な被害の深刻化を意味する。さらに、氷河が溶ける速度が早まり、永久凍土が溶け、世界中で海中の熱蓄積や酸性度が高まることによる、より永続的な被害の増加をも意味している。このような被害は、今から数十年後に炭素を除去したとしても修復することはできない。

木材の燃料利用という誤った解決策に対する政府の補助金は、本質的な炭素削減を骨抜きにし、気候問題を倍増させることになる。企業は化石エネルギーの使用を、実際に温暖化を軽減する太陽光や風力ではなく、温暖化を進行させる木質燃料へと切り替えている。

日本やフランス領ギアナを含む一部の地域では、発電のために木材のみならず、パーム油または大豆油が燃料として提案されている。これらの燃料の生産には、アブラヤシまたは大豆の生産拡大が必要となるが、それは大量の炭素を蓄積する熱帯林の伐採、また重要な炭素吸収源の減少につながり、どちらも結果として大気中の炭素量を増加させる。

森林又は植物油の管理に「持続可能性基準」を設けても、炭素排出量が増えるという結果を避けることはできない。持続可能な管理によって、木材伐採による炭素債務の最終的な返済は可能になるものの、数十年又は数世紀にも渡る温暖化の進行を帳消しにすることはできない。また、高まる食料需要に応えるために、より一層の森林開拓を求める国際的な圧力は、植物油の需要が増えればさらに強まるだろう。

土地利用変化に起因する排出に対して各国に責任を負わせる仕組みは望ましいものであるが、それだけでは木材の燃料利用をカーボンニュートラルとみなす法律の欠陥を是正することはできない。既存の法律が、発電所や工場による木材の燃料利用を促すインセンティブを与えている限り、各国に排出の責任を負わせても現状を変えることはできないだろう。各国がディーゼル燃料使用による排出に責任を負っているからといって、ディーゼルがカーボンニュートラルであるという欠陥ある理論に基づいて、トラックがより多くのディーゼル燃料を燃やすことを推進する法律がまかり通るのと同じことなのである。気候変動に対する国の責任を形作る条約及びそれを遂行するための各国のエネルギー関連法が、各国が推し進める活動によって気候面でどのような効果をもたらすのか、的確に評価される必要がある。

貴国の今後の決断は、世界中の森林に大きな影響を与える。世界のエネルギー供給において木材からのエネルギーが僅か2パーセント増えただけで、木材の商業伐採を倍増させる必要

が生じるからだ。欧州でのバイオエネルギーの増加が、すでに現地の森林伐採を大きく増加させたとする十分な証拠も存在する。また、このようなアプローチは熱帯諸国に対し、更なる森林伐採を促す手本を作ってしまう（数国がすでにその意思を公約している）。これは、国際的に合意された森林協定の目標を阻むものだ。

これだけの被害を防ぐためには、政府は自国他国の森林を問わず、今日存在する木材の燃料利用に対する補助金やその他奨励制度を中止すべきである。欧州連合は、その再生可能エネルギー基準及び排出量取引制度の中で、バイオマス燃料をカーボンニュートラルとして扱うことを止める必要がある。日本は、木質バイオマス燃料を利用する発電所に対する補助金を中止しなくてはならない。そして米国は、新政権が地球温暖化緩和に向けた気候に関する規則や奨励制度を制定する上で、バイオマス燃料をカーボンニュートラル、あるいは低炭素として扱うことを避ける必要がある。

気候面でも生物多様性の面においても、木は死んだ状態よりも生きています状態の方がより価値がある。将来の実質排出ゼロ目標達成のため、貴国政府は森林の燃焼ではなく、その保全・再生に努めるべきである。

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