

**COMMISSION FOR AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT
IN NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION AND ADJOINING AREAS**

17th Floor, Jawahar Vyapar Bhawan (STC Building)
Tolstoy Marg, New Delhi-110001

F. No. A-110018/01/2021/CAQM/Vol-VII/105 Dated: 03.06.2025

Subject: Directions under Section 12 of Commission for Air Quality Management in NCR and Adjoining Areas Act, 2021 – Mandatory use of paddy straw based bio-mass pellets in brick kilns located in the State of Punjab and non-NCR Districts of Haryana – for prevention and control of Paddy Stubble Burning – reg.

1. WHEREAS, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India, in exercise of the powers conferred under Section 3 of the Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas Act 2021, has constituted the Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas (hereinafter referred to as the Commission);
2. WHEREAS, under section 12(1) of the Act, the Commission has powers to take all such measures, issue directions, etc., as it deems necessary or expedient for the purpose of protecting and improving the quality of the air in the National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas;
3. WHEREAS, Section 12 (1) of the Act, empowers the Commission to issue directions in writing to any person, officer, or any authority and such person, officer or authority shall be bound to comply with such directions;
4. WHEREAS, paddy stubble burning is a matter of grave concern due to its high impact on air quality in NCR and the Commission, since

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inception, has been continually deliberating upon the issue with major stakeholders including with the State Governments of Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan, GNCTD and all other concerned academic and knowledge institutions in this field;

5. WHEREAS, the salient features of the respective updated Action Plans for paddy stubble management during 2025 were presented by the representatives of the State Governments of Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh before the Commission in its meeting held on 27th March 2025;
6. WHEREAS, ex-situ utilisation of paddy straw has been identified both by the States of Punjab and Haryana as effective means for management of paddy straw and obviating its open burning and there has been an encouraging trend in the increased ex-situ utilisation of paddy straw in various applications from year to year, thus leading to the dual benefits of prevention of open burning and also economic value to farmers and other stakeholders in the paddy straw supply chain;
7. WHEREAS, bio-mass pellets prioritising paddy straw have already been mandated by the Commission to be co-fired @5-10% of the annual fuel (coal) requirement in the identified 11 thermal power plants within 300 kms of Delhi, there exists a similar untapped potential of utilisation of paddy straw based bio-mass pellets in large number of brick kilns located in NCR and beyond;
8. WHEREAS, particularly from the standpoint of a common airshed approach for the entire NCR and adjoining areas and an overall improved air quality in the region, the Commission vide Direction No. 65 dated 23.06.2022 directed for adoption of a standard list of clean fuels in NCR w.e.f. 01.01.2023, also permitting bio-mass based fuels for industrial applications in the NCR, beyond NCT of Delhi,

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thereby implying that brick kilns can use pellets / briquettes of biomass / agriculture residue;

9. WHEREAS, vide Notification No. GSR 143 (E) dated 22.02.2022, all new brick kilns shall be allowed only with zig-zag technology or vertical shaft or use of PNG as fuel in brick making and the existing brick kilns not following these technologies shall be converted to zig-zag technology or vertical shaft or use PNG as fuel within a period of 2 years, which has since ended;
10. WHEREAS, while there are more than 3000 brick kilns located in the NCR Districts of Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Rajasthan, the Hon'ble NGT vide its order dated 17.02.2021 in OA No. 1016/2019, inter alia, directed for operation of a minimal number of brick kilns in the NCR only during the months from March to June, also permitting operation of such brick kilns in an unrestrictive manner which operate on PNG, even beyond these four months;
11. WHEREAS, no brick kiln in the NCR is reported to have been converted to PNG as fuel so far, in wake of the directions for standard list for approved clean fuels for NCR which bans coal for industrial applications other than in TPPs, bio-mass based fuels appear to be the most economical permissible option for brick kilns in the NCR;
12. WHEREAS, the Central Pollution Control Board in its Technical Evaluation Report on Use of Bio-mass as Fuel in Brick Kilns in NCR (May 2025) has, inter alia, concluded that the brick kilns, which have been shifted to zig-zag technology can be fired by means of solid biomass fuels in pellet or briquette form. It has been further concluded in the report that bio-mass pellets / briquettes offer comparable characteristics / calorific value and other technical parameters as coal which was used earlier in the zig-zag brick kilns in NCR, while also maintaining the quality of bricks. According to

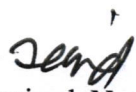
the CPCB Report, *"solid bio-mass based fuels can substitute coal, without any technical limitations"*;

13. WHEREAS, there are no restrictions on the periods of operations of brick kilns in the non-NCR districts of Haryana and in the State of Punjab, about 940 and 2050 brick kilns are reported to be operational in these areas respectively, where the annual fuel requirement is substantially high and thus these offer a huge potential for use of paddy straw-based bio-mass pellets as fuel and improvement in ambient air quality;
14. WHEREAS, arising out of various deliberations held by the Commission with different stakeholders and appraisal of the draft Plans submitted by the State Governments of Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, the Commission, inter alia, identified "mandating use of paddy straw pellets/briquettes for co-firing in brick kilns" as one of the most effective means of enhancing ex-situ management of paddy straw and thereby preventing its open burning in the fields;
15. WHEREAS, the Hon'ble Supreme Court while hearing the matter in WP (C) No. 13029 of 1985 on 03.04.2025 inter-alia directed that *".....for the time being, we approve the recommendations made by CAQM in its report dated 25th March, 2025. Now CAQM will issue directions in exercise of powers under Section 12 of CAQM Act and serve copies thereof on the States and other stake-holders"*.
16. Now, THEREFORE, in view of the compelling need to control air pollution from uncontrolled / open burning of paddy straw, the Commission hereby directs the State Governments of Punjab and Haryana to mandate use of paddy straw-based bio-mass pellets / briquettes in all brick kilns located in the districts beyond NCR, as one of the means towards elimination of the practice of open paddy stubble burning, aiming for 50% co-firing of paddy straw based

and

pellets / briquettes with a target of at least 20% w.e.f. 01.11.2025, 30% w.e.f. 01.11.2026, 40% w.e.f. 01.11.2027 and 50% w.e.f. 01.11.2028;

17. Requisite directions / orders shall be issued by the State Governments of Punjab and Haryana in this context mandating the above stipulation for use of paddy straw-based bio-mass pellets / briquettes in brick kilns located in non-NCR areas. Action taken towards compliance of these Directions may be apprised to the Commission on a monthly basis.


(Arvind Nautiyal)
Member- Secretary
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To


1. The Chief Secretary, Government of Punjab, 6th Floor, Punjab Civil Secretariat- 1, Sector- 1, Chandigarh- 160001.
2. The Chief Secretary, Government of Haryana, 4th Floor, Haryana Civil Secretariat, Sector- 1, Chandigarh - 160001.

Copy to:

1. Secretary, Environment, Government of Punjab
2. Member Secretary, Punjab Pollution Control Board.
3. Additional Chief Secretary, Environment, Government of Haryana
4. Member Secretary, Haryana State Pollution Control Board.

Copy also to:

The Chairperson and all Members, CAQM


(Arvind Nautiyal)
Member- Secretary