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£100m Port of Liverpool biomass handling facility enters service

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- **BY** NEIL HODGSON



Train full of Biomass leaves Drax Power's new £100m handling depot at Seaforth Docks Peel Port. from left, Gary Hodgson, Peel Ports, and Andy Coss, CEO Drax Power. Picture by Gavin Trafford

The first shipments from a £100m biomass handling facility on the Port of Liverpool have started. Almost 50 jobs have been created at the Seaforth Container Terminal site which Peel Ports operates for the huge Drax power station in Yorkshire.

The port will handle up to 3m tonnes of wood pellets a year imported from North America which will be taken by train every day to power the plant.

The pellets are a by-product of the commercial forestry and saw-milling industry and will provide the Selby-based facility with a new, sustainable low carbon fuel source.

Nearly 50 staff will work at the port facility, but a further 300 jobs have been created as part of the supply chain process.

The biomass terminal includes a rail loading facility and a 100,000 tonnes storage capacity.



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Yesterday the first freight train with 25 specially-designed wagons carrying 1,600 tonnes of pellets left the dock site for the 99-mile journey to the power station, which last year provided more than 12% of the UK's renewable electricity.

Andy Koss, chief executive of Drax Power, told ECHO Business: "This is a very, very important day for us, the first train leaving Liverpool. We have just completed phase one and Peel have done a cracking job to get us here today."

The terminal, owned and operated by Ligna Biomass (a company owned by the shareholders of Peel Ports), will become fully operational next July when phase two is completed and it will be able to facilitate up to 10 train loads of pellets to be sent to Drax each day.

Mr Koss said in the meantime the service will move to four trains a day fairly quickly.

Drax has six generators and three are biomass-fuelled.

Mr Koss said if the Government approves proposals for a fourth generator to be converted to biomass fuels, hopefully in the next six to 12 months, it would mean more of a workload for the Port of Liverpool operation.

He said: "Liverpool is one of four ports we use, including three on the east coast, which provides a robust supply chain.

"We use both east and west coast ports to deliver reliable power.

"If we get the go-ahead from the Government to convert a fourth generator to biomass, it would lead to more work for Peel," he added.

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