

Environment and Sustainability Committee

Inquiry into Energy Policy and Planning in Wales

EPP 56 – Mrs Jitka Novak BSc hons

Objections to any proposed development of wind farms

I am writing to you to express my objections to wind farms for the following reasons:

Reduction of CO2 emissions during the lifetime of wind farms is negligible:

Conventional power stations needed as back up produce higher CO2 when idle than when working efficiently

Manufacture of concrete needed for the wind turbine bases produces large amount of CO2

Transportation of the wind turbines and bases emits CO2

Wind farms are usually situated on tops of the hills, of which many contain substantial amount of peat. The disturbance of peat areas result in the production of carbon dioxide.

Wind farms are expensive and inefficient

Wind farms are only viable because of Renewable Obligation Certificates.

The electricity produced by wind power is unpredictable and intermittent.

On average wind turbines are only operational 20 – 30% of time. This means that conventional power stations are needed as back ups, thus obviating the reason for building the turbines in the first place.

The wind farms developers claim that the wind farms will provide for the electrical demand of thousands of houses but this can only occur when the wind is blowing at the right speed! Presumably, at all other times, we shall sit in the dark and drink cold water!

Turbines use some of the electricity they generate to operate pumps controlling the blades, wind sensors ..etc. This could be as high as 50% of their electricity production.

Land usage and environmental damage

A single conventional power plant produces electricity equivalent to 1 000 turbines and occupies less than 0.1 square miles. 1 000 wind turbines would cover about 100 square miles.

Most of the Welsh hills on which the turbines are situated act as gigantic sponges which retain heavy rainfall water and allow that water to drain slowly into local rivers. The covering of the hills with thousands of cubic meters of concrete (some turbine basis are 30 feet deep) would lead to higher risk of flooding.

There is disturbance to bird population.

The connection to National grid from the remote wind farm places will not only disfigure the landscape but again take up acres of land.

Socio-economic impact

By creating large wind farms in rural countryside the government has introduced a 21st century feudal system. The wealthy landowners are getting even wealthier whilst the rest of the community pays for their riches through higher electricity prices.

The pledges of wind farm developers to share their profit with local communities are laughable and amount to nothing more than bribery.

The public demand is for natural landscapes free of industrial activities. The wind farms are industrial sites, not farms as the title suggests. Areas with prolific wind turbines will experience drop in tourism, hence the local economy will suffer.

The house prices drop in the near vicinity of wind farms.

There are detrimental health effects on those living near the wind farm sites.

A way forward

The government should look at the ways of **reducing** electricity consumption.

The public subsidy provided towards a single wind turbine would pay for a proper insulation of 500 homes – this would, in two years, reduce electricity consumption equivalent to the lifetime production of electricity by that turbine.

The current electricity charges do not provide incentive for people to reduce their electricity consumption. The more electricity a consumer uses the cheaper it is per unit. The current trend should be reversed – the first so many units should be at a minimal cost increasing with the amount of electricity used.

The government should adopt the approach “small is beautiful” and concentrate on small local projects. For example each new house built should have photovoltaic panels on the roof. This would not only provide electricity (we have small PV panels on our roof which generate the same amount of electricity as we use – there is no gas in our area) but also provide jobs for the local people – small factories making the PV panels, qualified electricians and PV fitters. It would also provide a “feel good factor” for the house owners and tenants – it is very satisfying to be producing ones own electricity.

Conclusion

Enormous wind turbines are built to convince the public that the government cares even though the turbines have little effect on reduction of CO₂ and electricity production.

It is shameful and shocking that such an important issue as global warming and energy demands is subject to token politics and spin.

Many of those who were previously supporting wind energy have now changed their minds (for example professor Howard Dalton, chief scientific adviser to DEFRA, professor Jim Lovelock, the green guru, David Bellamy, environmentalist and botanist).

If, after all the available evidence on the environmental damage and high cost of wind energy you are still in favour of building more wind farms you should examine your real reasons for doing so. It can not be because you are concerned about global warming and our environment.

Mrs Jitka Novak BSc hons