

Environment and Sustainability Committee

Inquiry into Energy Policy and Planning in Wales

EPP 60 – Miss Tamasine Stretton

I am pleased that the Welsh Government are looking into energy policy and planning in Wales and have requested evidence. I'm sure you have been inundated with evidence relating to wind energy, so I would like to bring the following to your attention.

It is claimed that new nuclear power stations are needed to:

1. meet our energy demands
2. provide affordable electricity
3. help deal with climate change; and
4. create new jobs

All these claims are untrue.

1. UK energy need

Not enough is being done to address the fundamental issue of reducing our demand for energy. Money that is currently spent on massive subsidies for energy generation should instead be used to help us reduce our energy needs. Tougher policies should be introduced to drive this reduction in demand further - please see the following for more information:

- J.A. Clarke et al. *The role of Built Environment Energy Efficiency in a Sustainable UK Economy*. Energy Systems Research Unit. University of Strathclyde.
- www.voltageoptimisation.com

Even if you choose to ignore this common sense approach, the fact is we do not yet have a clear picture of what our demand for energy will be; we should not contemplate building any new energy infrastructure until we have determined whether it is necessary. So please sign EDM 644 to ensure that this process occurs as soon as possible.

Even in a worse case scenario of a 50% increase in energy demand, there is clear evidence that energy efficiency and renewables can more than meet demand. What's more these measures can be introduced now, rather than the 5-10 years we would have to wait for nuclear.

2. Affordable electricity

Saving energy is by far the cheapest way of meeting our energy demand, but again even if we ignore this, the truth is that nuclear power is far from cheap and in fact two government departments (Cabinet Officer data

2002 & DTI data 2005) have shown that nuclear electricity costs more than renewable energy.

We are assured that no public money will be spent on new nuclear power stations, but the money has to come from somewhere, so we will see:

- Higher fuel bills to cover the £28 to £67 billion it would cost to build all 10 proposed nuclear plants.
- Hidden subsidies:
 - £1.6 billion of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority's annual budget
 - Insurance subsidy – the nuclear industry is only required to pay a fraction of the cost of insuring against claims
 - The cost of protection against terrorism
 - If a decommissioning company fails, the government would foot the bill
 - Donations to international nuclear research

So, the cost to ordinary folk like me is clear; nuclear equals not only fuel hikes, but also irresponsible use of my hard-earned taxes.

3. Climate change

The cleanest way deal with CO₂ emissions is efficient use of the energy in the first place.

Whilst Nuclear is cleaner than current conventional energy generation, it is not carbon-free. Nuclear fuel production, transport and long-term storage all produce significant quantities of greenhouse gases. A recent academic study¹ estimates that nuclear would produce 66g CO₂e/kWh, 250% higher than most forms of renewable energy.

1 – Benjamin Sovacool, *Energy Policy* 36 (2008) 2940-2953
(www.nirs.org/climate/background/sovacool_nuclear_ghg.pdf)

4. New jobs

Claims that each nuclear power station could create 9000 jobs, even if true (Sizewell B resulted in only 4385 jobs, of which less than 50% were local), is a drop in the ocean compared to other energy solutions:

- Energy efficiency – 250,000²
- Microgeneration – 68,000³
- Renewables – vary between 1,000 and 107,000 **per year**⁴

2 – Report to Parliament by the Secretary of State, April 1999 pursuant to the Home and Energy Conservation Act 1995.

3 – A 2008 government report (sorry, I have been unable to get confirmation on which one, but it could be: 08/912—'The growth potential for microgeneration in England, Wales and Scotland'.

4 – Jose Goldemberg (2004) The Case for Renewable Energies. Instituto de Electronica e Energia. University of Sao Paulo. pp 5

What's more, these jobs could be created now, not in 5-10 years time when new nuclear power stations commence.

I trust you find this information useful.

Yours sincerely,

Miss Tamasine Stretton