

Environment and Sustainability Committee

Inquiry into Energy Policy and Planning in Wales

EPP 87 – Mrs S Smith

Environment and Sustainability Committee

Cardiff Bay

CF99 1NA

12th September 2011

Dear Sir/ Madam.

I am writing with regard to the inquiry into ‘energy policy and planning in Wales. :-

Regarding Current devolution arrangements and the delivery of WAG’s desired energy ‘mix’.

In response to your first four bullets points. Implications are neither good nor bad, because the policies laid down in the WAG’s desired ‘energy mix’ are so faulty. The intrusion of Central government policies could hardly be more harmful to the environment, economy, the health and well being of the residents, and the heritage of the landscapes of Wales. WAG; as evident in their Welsh Planning Policy, seems no more concerned with these issues and the protection of the land they have been elected to represent, than do the politicians at Westminster. If power were to be devolved to WAG their implementation of the policies laid out in *A Low Carbon Revolution – Energy Policy Statement (2010)* ¹ and the *UK Renewable Energy Roadmap (2011)* would have a catastrophic effect on the environment, economy, well being and heritage of the Welsh landscape and the people of Wales. If WAG were inclined to review the flawed ideas laid down in TAN8 and seriously address the issue of the development and promotion of truly sustainable, effective energy, coupled with an affordable and workable option, then I would prefer the power to be devolved. But until WAG decide to take this step; their policies are just as pointless, thoughtless, and shortsighted as those coming from Westminster.

The target of 3% reduction in Carbon Gases would not be achieved, for the simple reason that the alternative; so called ‘green’ energy sources, they propose using are not effective.

Regarding the two petitions :-

‘Welsh Government planning guidance as it relates to onshore wind energy and the impact on local communities and infrastructure.’ Or in lay terms; TAN8: wind farms & high voltage lines spoiling our communities & Transport of wind turbines in mid Wales.

There is a growing body of evidence accumulating that shows that the development of on shore wind turbines on the industrial scale proposed will have nothing but a detrimental effect on the environment whilst doing nothing to contribute to the reduction of Green House Gases, nor save us from the looming energy crisis. The statistics and the facts behind the generation of co2 from the construction work, and the destruction of upland peat bogs completely counter balance any potential saving from the energy generated by wind. The impetus to promote these developments is based on the out of date data offered by the wind industry. Data that is based on the ETSU study R1997. A study which is over fourteen years old and concerns turbines and developments of a much smaller scale. The facts regarding the affects of the new generation of turbines; some standing over 600feet tall, are not known. Effects such

as Amplitude modulation, low frequency noise, health risk related(also related to the pylons that would be constructed to carry the power from the power plants) (more commonly called wind ‘farms’). The supposed benefits of Wind energy are also hugely inflated; with the projected power generation, frequency and reliability of energy, bearing no resemblance to the true energy output of these power plants. Only because these power plants are perceived to be part of the “ *Low Carbon Revolution* “ are they given consideration at all. Any other sort of power plant; with a power output so unreliable, intermittent and so low, and so financially costly, which needed to alter the economy and environment on this scale would be dismissed out of hand. One has to question; in the face of such evidence, what are the true motivating factors behind these developments. Political posturing based on dogma and misinformation, and profiteering on the part of the companies who stand to make vast sums of money from the subsidies paid by the citizens of this country? Certainly not because of any true “*Renewable Energy*” benefit.

TAN 8; which has opened the way for the applications for the development of industrial power plants (commonly known as Wind ‘Farms’), across the Welsh landscape is a flawed document. It pre - supposes that the power plants are a ‘sustainable’ energy source. This view is based on manipulated and outdated information, provided by the very people who stand to make huge financial gain – the power companies or their agents. WAG should review TAN8 and also review its energy policies. By considering independent up to date information; readily available from organizations such as the Renewable Energy Foundation. (www.ref.org.uk/uk-renewable-energy-data .) it would be clearly shown that the facts behind these proposals show that they are not only financially uneconomic, but also unviable as a ‘sustainable’ power source.

Alongside this, NO environmental or economic study has been undertaken and no consideration of any of the following has been made.:

1. The effects on the landscape with regard to increased run off of water,
2. Erosion of the landscape from increased run off of water
3. Increased flooding of the immediate areas, and areas further afield.
4. The environmental impact on the flora and fauna of the landscape.
5. The economic impact on the population through the cumulative effect of development
6. Loss of the visual amenity for the residents of the area.
7. Loss of millions of pounds of income from tourism as visitors stay away because of :-
 - a. Vandalisation and Destruction of a visually stunning landscape and the loss of the visual amenity, with;
 - i. Visually obtrusive and inappropriate Turbines and Pylons out of all scale to the landscape and
 - ii. The volume of Turbines and Pylons out of all scale to the landscape.
8. Loss of Jobs – the simplistic references to job generation do not take into account that the powerplant (wind’farm’) workforce will largely come from outside the area, nor does it account for the loss of jobs following the loss of income from tourism which will outweigh any gain.
9. Depreciation of Land and property values – estimated 70% (And no serious compensation offered to those affected)

10. Grid lock created by over 3,000 abnormal loads over 5 years, alongside over 22,000 loads of construction traffic.
11. Destruction of road structure due to the above.
12. Destruction of hedgerows; currently protected by planning law, due to the above.
13. Affect on health as emergency services are impeded.
14. Affect on safety as emergency services are impeded.
15. Affect on health from pylon emissions.

The sum of the monies put aside to subsidise this out of date, over sized white elephant would be better spent in;

- a) the installation on every roof top in the country of solar panels of various types; and
- b) the serious research into and development of, water, wave, ground and air source energy – sources which are predictable and reliable, but have a lower return to the share holders of the power companies.

I would urge you to take a long hard look at the information gathered by independent bodies, such as the esteemed Renewable Energy Foundation (www.ref.org.uk/uk-renewable-energy-data). Instigate a **FULL** review of TAN8, and the WAG 'Low Carbon Revolution – Energy Policy Statement, March 2010', if you are committed to a truly renewable energy solution, and you are at all serious about the well being of the Planet and Wales in particular. Earn the right for the devolved power you seek. Seek out and promote the development of truly sustainable energy sources that will address the energy poverty we are facing. Do not blindly follow current political dogma and the myth of wind power. The windpower industry, is driven by political dogma, and the greed of power companies, that will have the 'lights going out' around us, whilst robbing the population not only of their money but the priceless jewel that is the landscape of Wales.

Yours faithfully

S. Smith (Mrs)