

Environment and Sustainability Committee

Inquiry into Energy Policy and Planning in Wales

EPP 145 – Mrs Leigh O'Connor

Dear Sir/Madam

I would like to list just a few of my objections and concerns regarding the plan to put large numbers of Wind Turbines and Electricity Pylons in Montgomeryshire. These plans are wrong on so many levels it is hard to know where to start. The evidence shows that onshore wind is not efficient in either reliable energy production nor in cost and that other ways should be explored and encouraged vis-à-vis energy conservation and micro energy production.

The particular issues that concern me are:

1. Vast areas of upland areas are to be concreted. Living on the River Severn I am particularly interested in water attenuation. The peaty hills of Wales hold water like a sponge and slow the descent of that water into the main river channels. Much work has been done at Plynlimon and up near Lake Vyrnwy in recent years in restoring the peat land. The Volumes of concrete that will be required for the Turbines as well as all of the access roads that will be built are likely to have an extremely detrimental effect on those living in the flood plain. There can be no doubt that the attenuation properties of the hills will be diminished and that water will surge into the rivers at a much faster rate. This will be coming at a time when the insurance industry will no longer be required by law to provide flood insurance and also at a time when the need for the UK to produce more of its own food is becoming increasingly prevalent. The Severn Valley is a very important farming area and increased flooding will have a devastating effect on these farms.
2. Farming is not the only important industry in Montgomeryshire. So too is Tourism. The sprouting of hundreds of turbines and pylons will certainly deter visitors. Not only because the landscape will lose much of its charm, but also because of the sheer nightmare that will ensue on the roads of this county. The size of the Turbines means that extraordinarily large lorries and loaders will be causing traffic chaos for years – it really does not bear thinking about.
3. It is inevitable that if you live near a Wind Farm or an Electricity Pylon that the value of your property will fall. I don't suppose that anyone will be wanting to pay the shortfall by way of compensation.
4. Another thing that worries me is the lifespan of these turbines – how long do they last and what happens when they need replacing. I understand that the current lifespan is 10 -15 years maximum. And then what? Can they be overhauled and reused? If not, then what has been the environmental cost of producing these monstrous constructions for such a short working life. If they cannot be revamped are they recycled? Does that mean more big lorries to take them away and bring in replacements? Or are they just left in situ and new turbines are erected on yet more concrete? These questions have not been answered as far as I can ascertain. All that the Windfarm companies want to do is to get them up as fast as possible to make their money. It is us, the people of Montgomeryshire who will be left with the legacy of this madness.
5. Finally, who actually benefits from Windfarms? If you shake it all down and brush away the spin and bull, it's about MONEY. Shareholders and employees of turbine companies and the few farmers that sell out. The politicians being seen to meet "targets" that don't actually help the planet or the populace. They are the beneficiaries. It's the rest of us that pay the cost, investing OUR money in this unreliable, environmentally damaging, economically nonsensical "energy solution". What folly!

Yours faithfully

Mrs Leigh O'Connor