

Environment and Sustainability Committee

Inquiry into Energy Policy and Planning in Wales

EPP 234 – Les Smith

This response is on behalf of myself as a Powys citizen.

I am a 72 year old Physics graduate and retired IT manager, with 4 children and 10 grandchildren, so I have a strong interest in cheap and renewable energy for their future. Following divorce I moved to Foel, Powys 8 years ago for the peace and beauty of the Welsh hills and moorlands. In that time I have devoted much time to walking in the locale and wider in Wales. The drama of the hills and the resident wildlife has astonished me repeatedly. When there was much talk 15 years ago of fossil fuels coming to an end, and human driven climate change/global warming, I was much taken with the concept of renewable energy, including wind turbines. I do believe in the overwhelming evidence of global warming and reject the conspiracy theories which abound in this area. Today, however, I believe that the true story of the horror of wind turbines is emerging, and I have become totally opposed to any further development in the UK and specifically in Powys. My reasons are as follows

1 - the wind blows at a suitable speed for turbines for perhaps 5 hours per day average. Where is power coming from for the remaining 19 ?? Answer - from fossil fuelled and nuclear power stations. I am persuaded that the power companies will keep backup running 24 x 7. I believe that our politicians know this at all levels, so why press on regardless ? After all, U turns are not unknown in national politics

2 - the tiny village of Foel in the Banwy valley is planned to be surrounded by 4 major windfarms, each of which is to be developed in a number of phases. This means that the village is to be afflicted by 5 to 10 years of chaotic development, to be followed by a continuous stream of development and replacement. The Dyfnant Forest site is to contain in its first phase 35 of the world's largest turbines - an obscene 606 feet high and 450 feet wide - and there is presently NO data available on their environmental impact - the first is still under development in Spain.

3 - the transport of these monstrous components will be unbelievable, and way beyond the road system of this area.

4 - The desecration of the landscape will be immense

5 - I have a real concern regarding Afon Twrch which will drain the majority of the Dyfnant site. The river flows 40 yards from my bungalow. Following the winter rains and snow, on February 5 this year the river came extremely close to flooding my garden and home. That situation can only be substantially worsened by the wind turbines, the clearing of the trees and the displacement of the moorland sponges of soil and peat by the enormous concrete bases necessary.

6 - Although the developers blandly declare that many jobs will be created, I believe that these will be heavily offset by the negative impact on tourism. Some caravan owners who were affected by the February flooding stated that had they known of the turbines they would not have replaced their vans in this location...

7 - I am concerned about the noise impact of these huge turbines both singly and collectively

8 - Finally, having invested my money and life in my Foel home, I no longer wish to stay IF these turbines are forced upon us, but the chances of selling at other than a knock down price are small - our homes are blighted

So in summary - thanks politicians of all levels and persuasions for imposing these foul machines upon us knowing that they will achieve nothing to reduce carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and having the effrontery to charge us all a subsidy on our electric bills to pay for them.

And I thought that after the expenses scandal politics could not sink any lower...