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Targets
What contribution will achievement of the 2020 renewables targets make to meeting Scotland's CO₂ emissions targets (a reduction of at least 42% by 2020 and an 80% reduction target for 2050) under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009?

As we know, from the report last year by the IEA, should CO₂ reach more than 450 parts per million, global warming will be irreversible without near limitless supplies of energy (such as that promised by nuclear fusion, or other future technologies that do not exist).

"If current trends continue, and we go on building high-carbon energy generation, then by 2015 at least 90% of the available "carbon budget" will be swallowed up by our energy and industrial infrastructure. By 2017, there will be no room for manoeuvre at all – the whole of the carbon budget will be spoken for, according to the IEA's calculations." (http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2011/nov/09/fossil-fuel-infrastructure-climate-change).

The Scottish Government's renewables targets ensure that at the very least, Scotland is not continuing to add pressure on the global ecosystem, as growth in Scotland's energy producing infrastructure will not add further CO₂ load to the earth's ecosystem than what is already being produced. The plan to export a 100% equivalent produced from renewable sources will also allow other countries which import this energy to reduce their overall carbon emissions. This is good global citizenship.

More could be done to drive down Scotland's CO₂ emissions. This however is less an issue of energy production policies, which are among the most progressive in the world, in terms of the bias towards renewable and greener forms of energy, than it is an issue of the chronic underinvestment we have seen in the energy efficiency of our homes, the forms of heating we rely upon, the chronic underinvestment in public transport, and the lax regulation upon industrial energy users to force them to become more efficient.

These are issues with the present government's priorities, however the laissez faire attitude to problems of energy efficiency, fuel poverty, and public transport provision is a bias shared across all the political parties in the Scottish Parliament, with the unproven exception of the Greens.

Planning and consents
Is the planning system adequately resourced and fit for purpose?
How can national priorities be reconciled with local interests?

The trouble with the planning process as it stands is that it allows people whose fundamental concern is subjective aesthetics to dominate the national debate. There is massive support for the reindustrialisation of Scotland, and for the greening of our
energy sources. A few angry, well heeled homeowners have been allowed to exercise
totally disproportionate influence over planning processes. These people are as
atavistic in their approach as those who opposed electricity pylons at the beginning of
the previous century. They appear to prefer the overgrazed, cleared and often
desertified landscape of empty, lonely glens where once there were people, industry
and forests to a Scotland with a future and a planet that is capable of supporting life.

These are the most selfish people in the country, and the problem with the planning
process is that they have been so far able to derail the most important step forward in
this country’s prospects since the advent of the welfare state.

National priorities can be reconciled with local interests by supporting local industry
which will bring jobs, investment, different forms of local land uses that can support the
end of the overgrazing which is desertifying the land, and allow the restoration of the
great Caledonian forest, withal. There is indeed a huge problem with multinational firms
coming into rural communities and siting windfarms which will bring less benefits than
more locally owned or cooperative enterprises would, if that is the pattern which repeats
itself over the country. There is a place for the multinationals, but it should be part of a
mixed marketplace, and local forms of ownership and management of renewable
energy should be encouraged and fostered to ensure greater buy-in and capacity to
ensure regeneration of blighted rural communities, which in many cases are
unsustainable due to the preponderance of owner occupiers (who are making the most
vociferous protests against needed development for subjective, atavistic and aesthetic
reasons). The role, too of Scottish Water, to be a publicly owned renewable energy firm
that is used to really kick start the reindustrialisation of rural communities is of urgent
priority.

**Energy market reform and the subsidy regime**

Are the reforms of the energy markets and subsidy regimes at both UK and EU
level sufficient to meet the challenge of the Scottish Government’s renewable
targets?

The UK Government is being led in its cuts agenda by right wing extremists who oppose
all renewable energy generation - there are 100 backbench Tories who oppose
renewables per se. This is political extremism. As a result the Coalition has cut a
whole range of subsidies to renewables. This will have disastrous effects on tackling
climate change. It is clear that the political extremists driving this cuts agenda are
unmoved by the need to safeguard our children’s' future. History will condemn them.

The role of Scottish Water to be a publicly owned renewable energy firm that is used to
really kick start the reindustrialisation of rural communities is of urgent priority. All
options should be explored to make this a reality.

Nick Durie
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