SUBMISSION FROM MR JOHN & DR JACKIE PADDISON

Targets

- At present Scotland produces 18% of its energy from ‘renewables’, to achieve 80-100% by 2020 it would take 4-5 times the number of wind turbines (presuming this will provide the bulk) covering a massive land mass or inshore waters. However the general public’s patience is wearing thin for the following reasons.

- To achieve targets of any kind public acquiescence is necessary and at first with the so called ‘green’ technologies there was much good will and agreement from the general public. However, when individuals see their electricity bills rocketing to almost unaffordable levels, the countryside being plastered with wind turbines (and that’s producing just 18%) and massive amounts of money in subsidy going overseas, that acquiescence is turning to anger. A few are getting very rich from the massive (and unsustainable) subsidies that wind farms receive. The middle classes are earning money from the FITS which will cost £7 billion while those who cannot afford the investment in solar or wind are paying for it. Ordinary sized houses with solar panels on their roof earn approximately £1500 per year and farms with a small group of 19m turbines earn many thousand. This rush to produce green energy has little to do with saving carbon emissions because there are better ways to achieve it and everything to do with pound notes.

- The general public’s approval of green technologies is alas wearing thin for many reasons not least because families living near wind farms who find their lives are badly affected by the noise that is inescapable. Acousticians now realise they have made mistakes in publishing what they believed to be acceptable noise levels [http://www.wind-watch.org/documents/bruce-mcpherson-infrasound-and-low-frequency-noise-study/](http://www.wind-watch.org/documents/bruce-mcpherson-infrasound-and-low-frequency-noise-study/)

- There is a growing body of research worldwide that demonstrates worsening health for those living near wind farms which is thought to be caused by infrasound. The Scottish Government recommend 2km setback distance (Scottish Planning Policy (Wind Farms) Feb 2010) of domestic properties from wind farms and D&G Council recommend 4Km (Technical paper 5) yet wind farm development is often closer. The Waubra Foundation researching health effects of wind farms recommend ‘Until the recommended studies are completed, developers and planning authorities will be negligent if human health is damaged as a result of their proceeding with, or allowing to proceed, further construction and approvals of turbines within 10km of homes .... To ignore existing evidence by continuing the current practice of siting turbines close to homes is to run the risk of breaching a fundamental duty of care, thus attracting liability’ (Dr Sarah Laurie, Medical Director, [http://www.waubrafoundation.com.au](http://www.waubrafoundation.com.au))

- Similarly, families living near wind farms are not compensated adequately if at all, they cannot sell their homes so they cannot move away. Wind farm companies provide bribes for Councils - that’s the only word to describe the
peanuts they are given which may not be spent in ways that people living near wind farms approve of. This county particularly is being sold short. Energy costs don’t just affect domestic users it affects industry and commerce. Decarbonising should not mean pricing industry and commerce overseas, yet that is what some industrialists are considering. While landowners are netting £50-£100,000 per year from wind farms the rest of the country is struggling. Any Government that does this to its people will find it very difficult to get re-elected.

- It appears that the present Scottish Government is stuck in a groove i.e. wind turbines. Individuals are left wondering if there are no other ‘green’ technologies. Wind farms are so intrusive that cumulative impacts can devastate an area. I have enclosed maps of the Rhins of Galloway, Wigtownshire (Western Galloway) and the whole of Dumfries and Galloway with wind farms plotted in them. In addition to this D&G Council has produced a plan identifying more land for wind farms. The 2020 targets would need four times the number of wind farms than we have at present and individuals are concerned that the entire landmass and in-shore waters of D&G will be ruined with these structures. When considering the costs of renewable energy, indirect or inadvertent costs should be included. What I mean is that in an area like Dumfries & Galloway, a reduction in tourism spending could be devastating. Not just to accommodation providers, but to visitor attractions, in shops, pubs, café’s restaurants, garages and post offices etc. Tourism is the third largest employer in Wigtownshire (West D&G) and nature based tourism nets £1.4 billion of the total tourist income of £11 billion for Scotland and directly employs 270,000 people. ‘Nature based’ means walking, landscape tourism, adventure activities (mountain biking, canoeing, kayaking), field sports, including fishing, and wildlife tourism (bird watching and conservation) (SNH magazine March 2011). However, Visit Scotland published a report (Investigation into the Potential Impact of Wind Turbines on Tourism in Scotland) and 80% of people said they came to Scotland for the scenery and unspoilt nature. More than 50% said, wind farms spoil the look of the place and 25% said they would avoid countryside with wind farms. The RSPB have stated that the Mull of Galloway nature reserve alone attracts 30,000 visitors and is worth £2.8 million to the local economy. So the cost of wind farms could be enormous and we will only know the cost after the event if the precautionary principle is not observed.

- Marine Scotland in their economic assessment of the South West state that the West coast of Scotland is one of the world’s premier destinations for sailing. Marine tourism contributes £300 million to the Scottish economy. According to the UK Atlas of Recreational Boating (2005) and the Royal Yachting Association, sailing is concentrated around the Scottish Firths including the Solway Firth. According to UKMMAS (2010) these sectors are expected to grow in the next few years. Day sailing, mainly cruising routes and racing are concentrated close to the shore. Therefore developing wind farms in the Solway has the potential to disrupt, reduce or destroy marine tourism in this area. The sheltered waters of Luce Bay and the Mull of Galloway are used extensively for sea angling particularly charter fishing and 79% are visitors from the rest of the UK. The SSACN estimate that sea
Angling is worth about £25 million per year to the Solway area. Tope fishing alone is worth £10 million a year in tourist income. Wind farms concentrated in this area are too big a risk to people’s livelihood for less than 18% of our electricity generation. In Wigtownshire we have gorgeous scenery, fabulous gardens, great marine recreation but precious little else, make a mess of the landscape or seascape and more unemployment will result. The Scottish Executive admit that “Socio-economic assessment suggests that there is little or no potential for Regional economic benefit, and indeed that there is the possibility for adverse economic impacts” (Marine Scotland, Blue Seas Green energy (Part A) The Plan, March 2011).

- There are also environmental costs that the general public are becoming aware of and are increasingly concerned about. For example, in the South West we have a proposal to develop a wind farm in the Solway Firth near the Mull of Galloway. This area has a bird sanctuary, it is a ’hot spot’ for nationally important species (JNCC), Luce bay and Luce Sands is designated SAC, the area is important for dolphin, whale and seal. Sharks use the earth’s electromagnetic forces to navigate and wind farm electrical cabling creates artificial electromagnetic forces and may disturb the sharks breeding ground. Luce Bay is also an important nursery area for commercial fish stocks.

There is a huge public backlash against the Scottish Government in communities across Scotland where wind farms are proliferating. The number of wind farm action groups is testament to that. The only means that individuals have to make their feelings known is writing to MSP’s, councils and the ballot box. The Scottish Government is aware that they are not taking people with them on this eco journey and they do it at their peril. The energy targets need to deliver the same agenda at lower cost and with less mess in the countryside.

Challenges

- Wind farms stop working in very windy weather when the companies are paid to shut them down because of grid overload. The companies are paid many times more than they would be for generating electricity and this does not make economic sense. The South West of Scotland may therefore be too windy for wind farms.
- I am confident that Scotland will never export electricity to England because the English can purchase energy via the French, Dutch, and to a limited extent, Irish interconnectors much cheaper. France and Holland use nuclear power to generate electricity.
- Reducing carbon emissions could be achieved in other ways – see note at end.

Planning and Consents

- The planning system for wind farms conflicts with local democracy. There are many examples where the local council reject an application and the Scottish Government then overrules that objection and gives the go-ahead for development. This is anti-democratic.
Skills and Workforce

- At the open day for the Glenstockdale wind farm near Stranraer I asked the owner of the company how many people locally would be employed either in erecting or maintaining the turbines. He replied that there would be none because there isn’t a company anywhere near Galloway that can carry out the work. He will be bringing them from Cornwall. How green is that? It appears therefore that the wind energy industry is not investing in skills and technology training in Scotland.

In addition to energy security governments should be planning for food security since a large proportion of our food comes from overseas. Any government that focuses on one and ignores the other is very blinkered.

There are easier ways of reducing carbon emissions. Approximately 25% of the UK’s carbon emissions is derived from food transport – within the UK not getting the food to our shores in the first place. This 25% could be massively reduced by encouraging people to grow their own food or at least a proportion of it. Whilst this may sound eccentric Todmorden and Burnely in Lancashire are growing food in gardens and public spaces such as around the edges of supermarket car parks, doctor’s surgeries, canal towpaths and even the beds at a police station or any other public land. The councils are employing people to help the general public and give advice. Todmorden is aiming food self-sufficiency by 2018. Farmers are buying into the idea by taking a lot more of their produce to markets. This could be achieved in Scotland and perhaps is even more important because of the isolation of some communities. We grow all our own vegetables and some fruit in our garden and feed ourselves for 12 months. Now that doesn’t make a mess of the countryside or cause people any harm.

Wind farms are a symbol of the ‘take, make and throw away’ society that we have become and do not provide us with energy security for the long term. The ‘take’ part of this equation is the toxic mess that is left after mining for rare earth metals needed for the magnets in wind turbine construction. The ‘make’ part is usually undertaken overseas and does not benefit the UK. The ‘throw away’ part will come in 25yrs when non-functioning turbines litter the countryside and then what of energy security?

Mr John & Dr Jackie Paddison
Wind Farms erected or proposed in Wigtownshire and bordering South Ayrshire February 2012.
Information from:- http://www.renewables-map.co.uk http://www.scotland.gov.uk/   SNH Wind Farm map of Scotland and wind farm developers.
Map plotting wind turbines erected or applied for and wind farm development on the Rhins of Galloway. February 2012

- Wind Turbines erected or planning granted up to Feb 2012
- Glen App/Loch Ree Wind Farm. Planning application made to Scottish Government
- North Rhins Wind Farm
- Wind Turbine applications refused
- Glenstockdale Wind Farm. Planning application applied for Feb 2012