SUBMISSION FROM MICHAEL CROSS

1. **Preamble**
   1.1 A main responsibility of the Scottish Government’s Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee is presumably to reconcile the policy on Energy with that on Tourism. There are clearly difficulties when plans to increase the proportion of renewable energy appear to be based primarily on a vast increase in the use of wind power, involving wind turbines and pylons in scenic areas which are the raison d’etre for the vital Scottish tourist industry. Concerning the debate about the effect of wind turbines on tourism, it must be unwise to depend on limited academic studies which are now increasingly out of date.

   1.2 Many of the questions in the terms of reference are extremely technical and financially obscure, ie familiar only to those working in the power industry. My object is therefore to express an opinion on areas where rational planning appears to have been lacking, leading to decisions which will have adverse effects on Scottish industry and population.

2. **Targets**
   2.1 Whether Scottish 2020 and 2050 renewables targets are achievable or not, any reduction in CO2 emissions will be totally insignificant in an international context.

   2.2 I believe that too much attention has been paid to attempting to reduce CO2 emissions by a quick fix dash to wind and not enough towards reducing overall energy use in Scotland by means of a balanced energy plan. Schemes involving loft insulation, solar panels and photovoltaic cells and ground source heat have not been properly evaluated prior to being launched. Promotion to the public has been piecemeal, inadequately funded and dubiously cost effective.

   2.3 In calculating reduction in emissions I question whether enough attention has been paid to the intermittency of wind and the polluting effect of the essential and underutilised conventional power plant necessary to maintain power supply when output from wind fails to very low levels.

   2.4 If the Scottish Government has estimated the overall costs of achieving its targets for renewable energy, the information has not been widely disseminated. The public has little or no idea of the existing proportion of their energy bill attributable to subsidy on renewable, let alone the £ multi billion cost of the renewable programme. There is a genuine need for the public to have access to clear and transparent cost/benefit analysis to enable more informed debate about different aspects of renewable energy.

3. **Challenges**
3.1 There must be concern about security of energy supplies in Scotland, with the rundown and no replacement of nuclear plant, coupled with an apparent over dependence on foreign owned wind power for the future. Ultimate security of power supply will depend on England or European Continental conventional or nuclear power supplied by interconnectors, which are themselves subject to power loss in transmission and therefore inherently expensive. While technology is being developed to harness wave and tidal power, this industry is still in its infancy, with only eight years to run before the critical 2020 target date. The recent takeover of Marine Current Turbines by Siemens provides another illustration of how UK developed technology tends to fall into foreign hands with the resulting lack of spin off into education, R & D and jobs.

3.2 The supply chain is not in place to meet targets and will require vast investment, adding cost to already hard pressed Scottish consumers’ bills and affecting Scotland’s ability to export any surplus power in a very competitive international market.

4. Planning and Consents

4.1 To comment on whether the planning system is adequately resourced or fit for purpose, I can only comment on personal experience of the Public Local Inquiry into SSE’s Blackcraig Windfarm. The application was approved on 21 March 2011, the last day of the last (minority) SNP Government. The decision ignored the opinion of the democratically elected Dumfries and Galloway Council and of a very considerable fraction of the local community, i.e. 423 people living within a five mile radius of the nearest proposed turbine.

4.2 For your information concerning local democracy, I attach a copy of my Precognition to the Blackcraig Local Inquiry which started in February 2008. I was instructed by the Reporter to delete certain sections which were deemed to criticise Government policy and these are highlighted.

Michael Cross
1. I am Michael Cross and I have lived in New Galloway for over eight years. I was born in Cumbria in the area which is now National Park. I attended a tiny primary school in Newlands Valley, Keswick and from an early age I developed an innate feeling for the value of beautiful landscape with its attendant flora and fauna. After obtaining a degree in Agriculture, I worked in the fertiliser, agro-chemical and vegetable seed industries during my whole career.

My first visit to Galloway was in the early 1960s when I spent about a year working for ICI at its Leaths Farm outside Castle Douglas. I thought then, and even more strongly now, that a large area of South West Scotland should have been given National Park status to protect its special character from inappropriate development, both industrial and domestic.

2. I was not initially an active member of GLARE, but a rash of planning applications for windfarms, with press comments and correspondence, resulted in my growing interest in energy matters. I have seen the devastation of the landscape at Dalswinton, where fifteen x 120m (to blade tip) turbines have been erected by Airtricity. This is an upland site, almost a plateau, without slopes as steep as Blackcraig. I cannot conceive that a windfarm could be constructed on the Blackcraig ridge without causing even more environmental damage due to the significantly steeper slopes there.

3. Last October I drafted a paper for this Public Inquiry. After discussions with several friends, who were also concerned with windfarm development in South West Scotland, some amendments were made. We have since discussed the paper widely and thoroughly with local people and some of their families.

4. GLARE document IX i gives the distances of houses from the nearest turbine within just over an 8km or five mile radius. The great majority of signatures are drawn from within that radius.

5. GLARE document IX ii is a copy of a map of the greater part of the area within that radius. A large blue pin represents 10 signatures while a small pin indicates an individual signature. The map itself will be displayed at the Inquiry.

6. I therefore speak on behalf of those four hundred and twenty-three (423) people as well as myself, who have signed, agreeing with the paper, indicating their opposition to the Blackcraig windfarm development and whose signatures are copied Appendix A. The original document will be presented to the Reporter.
7. This local residents’ objection has also been endorsed by regular eight (8) annual visitors to the Loch Ken area who take part in game-shooting activity, thus spending a considerable amount of money locally. Their signatures are copied at Appendix B and the originals given to the Reporter.

8. The total number for whom I speak is therefore four hundred and thirty-two.

I have been informed that the Reporter would be grateful if I would delete some passages from this part of my precognition since this evidence disputes the merits of national policy (in this case on renewable energy) and will not be admitted because such evidence falls outside the remit of the inquiry. To delete these passages I would feel obliged to consult with my 432 colleagues first in order to ascertain their view since this is an agreed statement. but I am prepared to omit them in deference to the Reporter.

THE UNDERSIGNED RESIDENTS OF NEW GALLOWAY AND SURROUNDING AREA, OBJECT TO THE CONSTRUCTION BY SCOTTISH & SOUTHERN ENERGY GENERATION LTD. OF A WIND POWER FARM ON THE BLACKCRAIG RIDGE CONSISTING OF 23X3MW TURBINES 110M HIGH TO THE BLADE TIPS AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE AND GRID CONNECTION GRID REFERENCE NX710830.

1. Background

The Scottish upland and highland landscape provides pleasure and recreation to the population of Scotland, the rest of the UK and millions of foreign visitors.

The ‘dash for wind’ has been stimulated by the availability to power companies and landowners of a vast amount of public subsidy to support wind power. Meanwhile energy saving measures and the use of other means of reducing carbon emissions have not received sufficient emphasis by UK/Scottish governments.

SSEG’s project, sited on a prominent ridge in Galloway’s unspoiled upland landscape, is an example of inappropriate windfarm development. Such developments have caused a public outcry in other scenic parts of Scotland. This development would add to the proliferation of land-based windfarms in Dumfries & Galloway, resulting in a significant adverse effect on tourism, the major local industry, together with loss of amenity to local populations.

As a group, we recognise that the UK needs renewable energy of which windpower can play a useful part; our objection is based on the inappropriate location of SSEG’s Blackcraig project. We question the role of a large number of relatively small land-based windpower stations as a major factor in a balanced clean energy policy. Windfarms should be located near centres of major population, where the power is mainly consumed and preferably on brown-field sites or off-shore.

The Blackcraig windfarm is not needed. The Scottish Government’s renewable target for electric power of 18% by 2010 has already been overtaken by the combination of hydro-electricity, together with
windfarms which are already operating plus those in process of construction and also consented. The Scottish Government’s target of 40% of electric power to be produced from renewable sources by 2020 cannot realistically be by runaway expansion of windpower. In the light of opposition to any new nuclear power capacity in Scotland, the necessary reduction in greenhouse gas emission can only be achieved by using clean technology for existing and any future hydrocarbon-burning plants, coupled with a manageable proportion of suitably sited windfarms and a massive reduction in energy consumption. Excess electrical power produced in Scotland, as a result of public money being available to power companies and landowners, has to be exported, raising the question as to which market.

2. Landscape Considerations

The 350-400m Blackcraig ridge occupies a very prominent position in the scenic area of the Galloway Hills and the River Ken Valley. It is highly visible from the A712, A713, A702 and A762 main roads. The relative elevation of the ridge from most surrounding viewpoints is in the region of 200-250m. Turbines 110m high would therefore appear to be about half the height of the visible ridge and located along its entire 5km length. For illustration, the Forth Rail Bridge Towers are 100.6m high.

The sheer scale of the 110m turbines in the Blackcraig weird project and its proximity to the populations* of New Galloway with Mossdale (500), Balmaclellan (270), St John’s Town of Dalry (491), Corsock (167), together with other small hamlets, would represent unacceptable industrialisation of part of the Galloway landscape. Countering the impression that the Glenkens is sparsely populated, there are 760 houses within a 5 mile/8km radius from the nearest turbine proposed on the Blackcraig ridge. The visibility of turbines on the Blackcraig ridge would be in sharp contrast to the Windy Standard I windpower farm (59.5m turbines) nestling in the hills near Carsphairn. Based on the applicant’s (NBW) photomontage, the proposed Margree project, where 120m turbines would be situated in a bowl in hills close to Corridoo, would have less impact on the local landscape than Blackcraig.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>There is considerable public concern about the growing cumulative effect of wind turbines on the landscape across southern Scotland. In the Glenkens, this effect would be caused by</th>
<th>No of turbines</th>
<th>Approx distance from New Galloway in miles</th>
<th>Approx distance from New Galloway in km</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wether Hill (operational)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>23.0</td>
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3. Conclusion

SSEG’s Blackcraig project could be described as an example of the ‘unacceptable face of capitalism’ where the drive for profit takes precedence over the welfare of the population adversely affected.

Blackcraig windfarm

- Blackcraig windfarm is not needed in relation to Scotland’s renewable power target for 2010
- 110m high turbine sited on a prominent ridge would have an overwhelming and damaging effect on the landscape
- Would have an adverse effect on tourism, the major local industry
- Would cause loss of amenity to local populations, especially the 760 households living within a five mile/8km radius of the nearest turbine

No payment by the developer to the local community could compensate for the negative impact of a windfarm on tourism and the damaging effect on the tranquillity of the Glenkens.


9. In my discussions with the signatories it was felt that the proposed development is fuelled principally by the power company’s drive for profit with little or no regard for the special amenity value of the Galloway landscape and tourist business in the area. This impression was confirmed in a statement in the Financial Times, dated Sat5/Sun6 January 2008, by Mr Ian Marchant, Chief Executive of SSE, when he announced the £1.08bn takeover of Airtricity. He said: ‘There’s enough growth to last us until the next decade.’ He referred to generous subsidies in the UK, resulting in wind being an attractive prospect for investors and said: ‘We can earn good returns from wind.’

A large number of local people and some additional regular visitors have shown their opposition to the Blackcraig windfarm development by signing their agreement to the paper presented. I therefore request on their behalf that the Reporter recommends that the Minister should reject Scottish and Southern’s proposal and that planning consent should not be granted.