

PE2160/G: Introduce an energy strategy

Petitioner written submission, 22 January 2026

At the meeting of the Petitions Committee on 14 January 2026, the Cabinet Secretary indicated that she did not know when the Government's energy strategy would be published, but she was hopeful it will be supplied by 2027, when NESO is due to deliver the Strategic Spatial Energy Plan (SSEP).

Wind energy, which is so predominant currently, cannot be the only source of energy, and other sectors are not realistically being considered in technical terms. Nuclear is not being considered, anaerobic digestion is low down the list, despite the northern Highlands being an agricultural area. For example, the development of gas from hydrogen for homes is unstable and there are still concerns about battery energy storage, especially in the Northern Highlands where there are insufficient firefighting resources. Dounreay is now connected directly to the National Grid. One expert has explained to me that the battery storage is DC and the grid AC at somewhere around 33,000v, so it would have to go through inverters that will produce heat (and noise). If they are connected they would probably do the power either way and the power going in or out of the batteries at any significant load will cause a good deal of heat that has to be dealt with, though a cooling system (loads of EVs globally going into thermal runaway whilst charging) and fast charging can cause swelling of the individual cells within the modules. Things could work well if the units themselves are perfect and the cooling really good. Batteries also need a rest and slower charging to keep them in good health. The Orkney Windfarm has been put on hold and there are serious concerns around Scotwind.

There are now more difficulties around decisions due to the Energy Consents Units now being outwith the overall responsibility of the Cabinet Secretary for Climate Action and Energy. This is confusing for the communities and makes even more work for them, much of it on a voluntary basis. They have to raise money to pay consultants which is not sustainable in the long term.

The Minister mentioned in her address that she had had discussions with Scottish Water. Desalination plants are used in Spain, driven by solar, in the main. The petitioner requests that the matter be considered at the next meeting.

I have input to the consultation on the MW increase above 50MW. I continue to work closely with the developers on alleviating some of the problems of lack of consultation and contingency planning. I would request that the Committee focus on energy mix and certainly costs of dispatching the various energy generation methods.

There is a concern about impacts on tourism. In a recent meeting with Edward Mountain MSP regarding the Climate Change Plan, he said "you have a plan, but no route map and no costings".