



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Official Report

ECONOMY, ENERGY AND TOURISM COMMITTEE

Wednesday 25 April 2012

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ECONOMY, ENERGY AND TOURISM COMMITTEE
13th Meeting 2012, Session 4

CONVENER

*Murdo Fraser (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)

DEPUTY CONVENER

*John Wilson (Central Scotland) (SNP)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

*Chic Brodie (South Scotland) (SNP)

Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)

*Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green)

*Angus MacDonald (Falkirk East) (SNP)

*Mike MacKenzie (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)

*Stuart McMillan (West Scotland) (SNP)

*John Park (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)

*attended

THE FOLLOWING ALSO PARTICIPATED:

Claire Baker (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab) (Committee Substitute)

J Mark Gibson (Communities Against Turbines Scotland)

Graham Lang (Communities Against Turbines Scotland)

Graeme Pearson (South Scotland) (Lab)

George Sorial (Trump Organization)

Donald Trump Sr (Trump Organization)

Maureen Watt (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)

CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE

Stephen Imrie

LOCATION

Committee Room 1

Scottish Parliament

Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee

Wednesday 25 April 2012

[The Convener *opened the meeting at 10:02*]

Renewable Energy Targets Inquiry

The Convener (Murdo Fraser): Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to the Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee's 13th meeting in 2012. I remind everyone present to turn off mobile phones and other electronic devices, with the exception of those in the media who have been given special permission to tweet during the meeting. However, in that case, all phones should be turned to silent.

For some reason, we have an unusually large number of guests this morning, so I will make a few procedural announcements. We do not anticipate any test of the fire alarm so, should there be a fire alarm, please follow instructions from the security staff in exiting the building.

All those in the public gallery are extremely welcome—thank you for joining us. If all our committee meetings attracted such levels of public interest, members would appreciate it. I remind you all to be courteous and respectful. This is not a public meeting, so I do not expect to hear anything from the public gallery. Any clapping or cheering—or for that matter booing—will not be tolerated. There should be no filming or photography by anybody other than authorised members of the media who have sought prior permission.

We expect the meeting to last for about 90 minutes. We have additional members with us who are not committee members but, when it comes to questions, I will prioritise committee members. As we have a lot of ground to cover, I ask questioners and those who answer the questions to be short and succinct.

We have received apologies for absence from Rhoda Grant. I welcome Claire Baker, who is here as a substitute. I also welcome two additional members—Maureen Watt and Graeme Pearson.

The only item on the agenda is continuation of our inquiry into the Scottish Government's renewable energy targets. I remind members and witnesses that that is what we are here to address.

I welcome our panel. From Communities Against Turbines Scotland, we have Graham Lang

and Mark Gibson; and from the Trump Organization, we have Donald Trump Sr, chairman and chief executive officer, and George Sorial, executive vice-president and counsel. I welcome you all and thank you for coming.

The witnesses may begin by making a brief opening statement of two or three minutes. Mr Trump, would you like to start?

Donald Trump Sr (Trump Organization): Thank you. I very much appreciate the opportunity to speak. We are addressing a very serious problem. In my opinion, it is one of the most serious problems that Scotland will have or has had.

I am all for renewable energy—I believe in wave technology and tide technology, and I believe that you have great opportunities for other forms of energy, such as hydro—but wind turbines, made in China, will lead to the almost total destruction of Scotland's tourism industry.

Recently, a very unattractive wind turbine was put up right on the course at Royal Aberdeen Golf Club. The club did not know about it and the members are going absolutely crazy. I said, "And you haven't seen the worst. Wait till they turn it on and you hear all the noise." They do not know what to do. They did not know that it was going to happen; they were blindsided.

The fact is that I have built what I said I was going to build, except that it came out even beyond what I said. Everybody agrees with that, and I have brought some magazines that feature the course. I have spent a tremendous amount of money—the project is debt free; there is no debt on the property—building what many already consider to be the greatest golf course anywhere in the world. I do not want to see it destroyed by having 11 monstrosities built that loom over it, literally 1 mile away. The development is land based, not sea based, because when it is 1 mile away, we are talking about a land-based development. We do not want it to happen.

The Vattenfall case is even worse than most such projects, because it is a test centre where they put up all different types of windmill. So, instead of at least taking the best-looking one—of which there are none—and putting up 11 identical windmills, different companies will be testing windmills. They do not have to do that; it is totally redundant, because it is done all over the place.

By the way, many countries have decided that they do not want wind, because it does not work without massive subsidies, it kills massive amounts of birds and wildlife and for lots of other reasons. Wind is a very inefficient form of energy. When you need it most, you do not get it, because the wind is not blowing.

Almost most important—other than the fact that the subsidies are enormous—is the fact that the windmills are so unattractive, so ugly, so noisy and so dangerous that, if Scotland does this, I think that it will be in serious trouble. I think that you will lose your tourism industry to Ireland and lots of other places that are laughing at what Scotland is doing.

I will be pleased to answer any questions.

The Convener: Thank you, Mr Trump.

I remind Mr Trump and members that this is not an inquiry into a particular planning application for any single development. We require to address the broader issues. I am sure that that will come out in the questioning.

Would somebody from Communities Against Turbines Scotland like to make some opening comments?

Graham Lang (Communities Against Turbines Scotland): Good morning. I am a committee member of Communities Against Turbines Scotland. CATS does what it says on the label; we are the national voice of all the groups campaigning against the flood of wind farm and smaller turbine projects that are damaging the landscape and the visual and residential amenity of people living near to them. We provide a service to communities. Of course, by residential amenity I mean noise.

My group joined CATS because it represents, at a national level, what my group and others have been doing for years. It takes protests to a higher level, which is why I am at the committee today.

My experience as an active participant in the wind farm debate is extensive. I am chair of two campaign organisations and mentor others. I am also a member of two wind farm community benefit forums. I am a trustee of the Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland, which is Scotland's oldest environmental charity.

My interest in renewables has taken me to every all-energy exhibition and conference in Aberdeen since 2006 and most of the RenewableUK—formerly the British Wind Energy Association—exhibitions and conferences held since then. It is quite interesting that, at this year's all-energy show, only three of the 75 hours of conference time will be devoted to onshore wind.

I take an interest in planning policy. When looking at applications, I examine the conflict between an applicant's subjective assessment of policy and what I consider to be a more honest and objective approach.

From experience, I am aware of the stress that communities are under from the moment that they become aware of a proposal through an

applicant's public exhibition or, sometimes, much earlier. From then on, they live with uncertainty about when the application will be made and what its eventual outcome will be. The process before consent or refusal is given takes years, and refusal does not mean the end of it. Many poor people's lives are on hold.

When I came to the parliamentary debate on 1 December 2011, every member's desk had on it a leaflet from Scottish Renewables—I have a copy here—that gave its version of events. It says that wind works—it does so about a quarter of the time. Scottish Renewables says that wind is not expensive, but it is at least twice as expensive as the wholesale price of the electricity that is produced. Scottish Renewables says that wind cuts CO₂ emissions—possibly it does so, but not by a headline-grabbing amount and, boy, is it expensive.

Scottish Renewables says that wind farms do not harm tourism or property prices, but they will and do. Scottish Renewables says that people support Scotland's wind energy. Many people tell me that they like wind turbines but follow that with the caveat that they would not like to live next to a turbine. Scottish Renewables says that wind is a major contributor to the economy, but by how much are we subsidising each job?

Scottish Renewables says that the environmental impacts of onshore wind are limited and managed. That is what the developers say, but the residual impacts on the landscape and amenity are adverse and unacceptable. Scottish Renewables says that wind farms are not noisy. If that is the case, why are people weeping in their beds at night, unable to sleep, swallowing sleeping pills and antidepressants by the handful and reporting a huge variety of illnesses? Such people are treated as collateral damage or cannon fodder—they just happen to be in the way, and that is tough.

We get the same soundbites from other pro-wind organisations and they do not stand up to sensible scrutiny.

The Convener: I thank Mr Lang and Mr Trump for their opening remarks. It is fair to say to Communities Against—[*Interruption.*] I am sorry; Mr Gibson wants to say something. I ask him to be brief.

J Mark Gibson (Communities Against Turbines Scotland): I will be brief. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to appear before the committee. My background is that I have a zoology degree from the University of Aberdeen and I am a chartered surveyor of some 30 years' standing. I am strongly involved in our local community. I am on the local school board and I am a trustee of the new United Nations biosphere.

Twelve and a half years ago, I came to Craigengillan—a historic but sadly neglected estate in east Ayrshire. Since then, we have worked very hard to restore it and bring it back to life. The important point is that our village is a former coal-mining community of some 3,000 souls. Since the deep pits closed a generation ago, the village has suffered terrible levels of unemployment and social deprivation. The community was excluded.

All of us—and I mean all of us; I am talking about Burns country—have worked together to build a new future that is based on nature and cultural tourism and on outdoor activities. We have received great support from our local council and from the Government—notably in connection with our greatest current project, which is the creation of the Scottish dark-sky observatory, which promises to be a wonderful asset not just for the coal-mining areas of the Doon valley but for the whole of Scotland.

We support the work of CATS. I am here to illustrate matters by giving a first-hand account of the sustained and almost intolerable pressure from wind farm developers on our community in the past eight years. A hard-hit but united community has come together and worked together to create a new future. In the course of that, we have received recognition by winning a number of national awards. That future is incompatible with schemes to encircle our hills and our valley with a ring of steel.

Being part of a community that is so spirited, generous and united in the face of enormous pressure has been a moving and humbling experience—more so than I can properly express in words. We are not a wind resource; this is our home and the background to and foundation of our lives and our future. Our experience of the would-be wind turbine developers and aspects of the planning system has not been a happy one.

10:15

The Convener: Thank you, Mr Gibson. I apologise for not recognising that you wanted to speak.

I appreciate that Communities Against Turbines is interested mainly in wind power, but I remind you that this is of course an inquiry into renewable energy more generally. One of the issues that committee members will want to explore is what alternatives there are to wind power and what other forms of renewable energy you might be interested in promoting.

Both parties touched on a number of issues in their opening statements and mentioned tourism, which is where we would like to start. I invite Chic Brodie to offer the first question.

Chic Brodie (South Scotland) (SNP): Good morning, gentlemen. My first question is for Mark Gibson. As a fellow man from Ayrshire, I congratulate you, Mr Gibson, on the community success that you have had at Craigengillan.

I recently attended an Ayrshire and Arran tourism partnership conference and a Dumfries and Galloway tourism industry conference at which there was no mention of onshore wind at all, and I found both meetings to be very positive. However, Mr Gibson, if we do not do something different in Scotland, which can be a major net exporter of electricity and power, we will quickly become a net importer and dependent on countries such as China and Russia and the middle east for energy supplies, with all the consequences that that would have for our economy and the sectors within it, particularly tourism.

Thorium is an experimental resource that is not yet developed; the uranium supply will be depleted in 40 years if China and India continue their nuclear development at the current rate; the cost of nuclear power is unpredictable and is high if decommissioning costs and fully burdened insurance costs are added as opposed to Government guarantees, so that is not a viable option; using coal will leave us at the mercy of Russia, Colombia, South Africa and Indonesia; and using gas will leave us at the mercy of Qatar.

Mr Gibson, you indicated to this committee's predecessor in 2008 that a combination of wind—although not onshore wind—hydro, biomass, tidal, wave, clean coal and strong energy measures is what we need to ensure Scotland's energy security and economy in the long term. Do you still agree with that proposal? If so, what are its benefits for Scotland's economy?

J Mark Gibson: That was a very long question. Can you distil it into one sentence?

Chic Brodie: We want to be a net exporter of power with a balanced energy mix that includes offshore wind, wave, tidal, biomass and so on. Do you still agree with your 2008 comment on that, or have your views changed?

J Mark Gibson: At the moment, the entire focus of Government policy is onshore wind, which is the only way of it achieving the targets that it has set. It is the only technology that is sufficiently advanced to get us there by 2020. I think that focusing on onshore wind is a disastrous mistake. We need a whole-system review. Are we doing this for energy security? Are we doing it to save the planet? If so, we have no idea of what CO₂ savings there might be or what the effects might be if they were not made. Nobody has done the most elementary preliminary study.

We cannot have more than about 10 or 12 per cent of electricity from wind, because it is intermittent and the grid becomes unstable. To cope with the times when the wind does not blow at the right speed, which can sometimes be prolonged, there must be back-up power stations, which therefore work intermittently and decelerate when the wind blows and accelerate when the wind stops, which means that they work inefficiently, just like a car engine. At the point of about 30 per cent contribution from wind, CO₂ and greenhouse gas generation becomes greater than if there had been no wind farms at all. So, wind does not work for energy security or for the environment.

Chic Brodie: I will move on to Mr Sorial and Mr Trump. Gentlemen, several issues form the backdrop of today's discussion: a 9 per cent increase in tourism visits to Scotland; new VisitScotland research that shows that 80 per cent of United Kingdom respondents state that their decision to holiday in Scotland would not be affected by the presence of onshore or offshore wind power generation facilities; a 70 per cent level of support among Scots for wind power as part of our energy mix; 210,000 visitors to Whitelee wind farm, the largest in Europe, since it opened in 2009; the RSPB—Mr Trump mentioned birds—saying that its members are generally supporters of wind farms and announcing plans for a wind turbine at its headquarters in Bedfordshire, alongside announcements of growth in the numbers of skylarks and so on; and similarly supportive comments from organisations such as WWF Scotland. Another complication is Mr Trump's letter of 14 December 2011 to Mr Løseth supporting wind farms, and the confusion between Mr Sorial's assertion that your organisation had received "scores" of supportive letters and Mr Trump saying that it had received "thousands" of such letters. Further, Ireland, which you mentioned, has plans to meet 40 per cent of its power needs from renewables by 2020, with the vast bulk coming from offshore wind.

Against the backdrop of those and other issues, can you confirm the detailed analysis that supports the many assertions that you have made against wind power, explain who produced it and when it was produced, and say whether you support that analysis?

Donald Trump: Let me just state that the letter said "appropriately located wind farms"; it did not say simply "wind farms". It was drawn up by our lawyer. In my opinion, people can go ahead and subsidise a wind farm in an appropriate location—in my opinion, an industrial location—if they want to. If you want to support that wind farm for the rest of your lives and get the UK to subsidise it—because, frankly, that is who will be subsidising it—that is fine with me, but I do not think that you

should ruin the looks and the great beauty of the countryside of Scotland, which is one of the country's greatest assets, if not its single greatest asset.

Coming into Scotland, I noticed an advertising campaign with the slogan, "Come home to Aberdeen". It featured pictures of magnificent fields, cathedrals and so on. I said to all the people who were following me at the airport, "Where are the windmills? I don't see any windmills. They have fields. They have cathedrals. They have everything. They must have 15 different pictures of beautiful sites. Not one windmill. Where are the windmills? It's false advertising."

I can tell you this: I am an expert at tourism. As you know, I have won many awards—I gave you a list of them. I just built a hotel in Chicago that *Travel and Leisure* magazine said is the best hotel in North America. I have won many awards in the recent past, let alone the long period of time before that. My clubs are rated among the best in the world. I have five-star and five-diamond clubs and a six-star club that is the only one in that category. I am an expert on tourism. If you dot your landscape with these horrible, horrible structures, you will do tremendous damage—

Chic Brodie: My question is this: where is the clinical evidence, not an opinion? I want an empirical assessment. Who has produced it? Will you share it with the committee?

Donald Trump: First of all, I am the evidence. You know what? I think that I am a lot more of an expert than the people who you would like me to hire, who are doing it to make a paycheck. I am considered a world-class expert in tourism. When you ask, "Where is the expert and where is the evidence?" I say: I am the evidence.

George Sorial (Trump Organization): Would anyone honestly believe that an industrial power plant is going to become a tourist attraction? That assertion is absurd. Would you suggest that we put a hotel in front of the St Fergus gas plant? That is essentially what you are saying.

Chic Brodie: I think that this has probably got a lot to do with property values, having looked through your accounts for the year ending December 2010. I do not necessarily personally subscribe to that view, but I think that property values have a lot to do with it. However, let me just test the golf tourism issue.

In the past week, I have talked to the club secretaries at six major open championship courses—three on the east coast of Scotland. Some are concerned about wind power but will work through the planning process if it affects them. I talked to the secretary of Royal St George's Golf Club in Sandwich, in Kent, which has a 100-turbine farm 7 miles away. That is

further away, I admit, than—*[Interruption.]* Can we have just one adviser, please?

The Convener: It is quite all right for notes to be passed.

Chic Brodie: Mr Trump talked about industrial locations. Royal St George's used to have a coal-fired power station next to it. That was knocked down and a wind turbine was built, which has now been knocked down, because a green energy park is being built, which will include turbines. The view is that that will not affect the golf at the club at all, so how did you arrive at your decision, Mr Trump? I know that you are the expert, but where is the evidence that supports the statement that you have just made?

Donald Trump: I say that the club is wrong and we will see what happens. All you have to do is take a little walk over to the Royal Aberdeen Golf Club and see how that course has been decimated. It is not going to hold any more championships. It cannot hold any more championships—

Chic Brodie: Royal St George's is on the open rota—

Donald Trump: Wait until you see Royal Aberdeen. If you go over and take a look at what happened to Royal Aberdeen in the past 48 hours, I think that even you—who are obviously biased—will say that the course has been decimated. There will not be tournaments there; there will not be championships there. One of the great jewels of Scotland has been devastated.

I know that people at Turnberry are fighting like mad not to have the windmills built. They are fighting like mad.

Chic Brodie: Funny, I talked to them yesterday—

The Convener: Mr Brodie, you have had a chance to ask your questions. Mr Lang wants to respond, and other members want to ask questions.

Graham Lang: I will make two points. Mr Leckie, of the Scottish Tourism Alliance, said that we need empirical evidence, and VisitScotland hastily published wind farm consumer research, which appeared yesterday like a rabbit out of the hat. VisitScotland's work is certainly not empirical evidence, and the Moffat centre's report is out of date. There is a real chance to do something thoughtful on the matter, which should perhaps be commissioned by an independent source and not by the Government.

Mr Brodie mentioned alternative sources of energy. Of course, a sustainable energy hierarchy is the best framework for tackling the issue. We need demand reduction, so that we use less

energy in the first place, and we need energy efficiency and conservation, so that we use energy more efficiently, particularly through insulation and efficient appliances. I could go on; there are many different ways of tackling the issue.

Mr Brodie also mentioned thorium nuclear. That is a viable possibility, which the Government should be looking at—

The Convener: We will talk about alternatives later in the meeting.

Graham Lang: I was just following up the mention of thorium.

The Convener: I want to address tourism issues, specifically.

Mike MacKenzie (Highlands and Islands) (SNP): Good morning, Mr Trump. I am interested in your views on tourism. The area that I represent includes the Orkney Islands. I do not know whether you have had the pleasure of visiting the Orkneys, but I am sure that you agree that that is a wonderful part of Scotland. You might be surprised to know that the Orkney Islands already generate 100 per cent of their electricity requirement from onshore wind. If you had the opportunity to visit Orkney, I am sure that you would agree that the landscape is not overburdened by wind turbines.

It is interesting that Orkney's tourism has grown for a number of years at a rate that is well beyond the Scottish average. Tourism is an important industry in the islands, and Orkney does it very well. I suggest that you visit, because there are various types of tourism. How do you explain the coexistence of the two phenomena: onshore wind generation at a level that meets the Government's targets; and increasing and improving tourism?

Donald Trump: From what I understand, there is a tiny population there. In a certain case where there is a tiny population, a couple of windmills can do something and can take care of that. Appropriately located industrial turbines are okay, as I said; the problem is that they lose a tremendous amount of money. Frankly, without a UK subsidy—and this is what is happening all over, and I made this statement to the papers—Scotland, if you pursue this goal of having these monsters all over Scotland, Scotland will go broke. As sure as you are sitting there, Scotland will go broke. The windmills are being subsidised massively right now by the UK, and without that subsidy, and if the UK—

Mike MacKenzie: Mr Trump—

Donald Trump: Excuse me, can I finish? If the UK decides that it will not further subsidise all those windmills, Scotland will go broke.

10:30

Mike MacKenzie: I am sorry, but you did not quite answer my question. Everybody would agree that the Orkneys are not an industrial landscape but a rural one, yet they generate 100 per cent of their electricity from wind. My point was that that seems to coexist happily with the tourism industry there. You have not explained that. You have made those other points before, but I ask you to specifically address that question.

Donald Trump: I do not know about the tourism industry in the area that you are talking about. All I can say is that most of the important and major golf courses and most tourism areas are fighting this like mad. The other gentlemen on the panel know exactly what I am saying. They know about the issue better than I do. Smart areas that want to remain beautiful and to remain viable as tourism areas are fighting the industrial turbines that are looming over their properties.

By the way, a wonderful woman who works for me is devastated because a small turbine has been put behind her house. She cannot sleep at night because of the noise—the flutter—and she does not know what to do. She came to see me to ask what she can do, because nobody wants to buy her house. There are tens of thousands of examples of that all over Scotland. You really ought to take a look at that. I bet that, if I went to Mike MacKenzie's community, which I am sure is lovely, and spoke to people there, they would not be happy about what has happened.

George Sorial: A new—

The Convener: I will bring in Mr Lang, who wants to answer the question.

Graham Lang: Mike MacKenzie is a member for the Highlands and Islands and lives in Easdale, I think.

Mike MacKenzie: Yes, I do.

Graham Lang: I know that part of Scotland well—I have had a few pints in the Tigh an Truish at Clachan. Mr MacKenzie will know that the proposed Raera wind farm near there, just at the side of the road, was refused planning permission, but there is now another wind farm application for nine turbines just above Clachan. I recently had a look at the planning website. The application has not been on the website for long, but there are 900 objections, although nothing like 900 people live in Easdale or Clachan or round about. Most of the objections come from the leisure industry and from people who sail there and enjoy that coast. The visualisations usually underplay the impact, but the visualisations for that scheme show that the impact is devastating. Looking from behind Clachan towards Cruachan and from the village, the impact is just dreadful. The area will not be

helped much by nine dancing ladies—they are not members of the Tiller girls.

Mike MacKenzie: I am grateful to you for attempting to answer my question, but you did not really address it. You mention dancing ladies. I had the privilege of going down to Gigha shortly after the wind turbines there were switched on, along with people from communities all over Scotland. The dancing ladies at Gigha were Scotland's first community-owned wind turbine development and have brought a huge benefit to the people of Gigha, who universally love their dancing ladies. Mr Lang, would you deny islands such as Gigha the opportunity to benefit from the technology? Mr Trump should feel free to answer the question, too.

Donald Trump: I have no idea whether they like them. If they do, I personally would be surprised, but I will take your word for it. It is your community, but I would be very surprised if people like them.

Mike MacKenzie: It is a matter of public record, Mr Trump.

Donald Trump: I am sure it is.

George Sorial: You are talking about—what?—20 to 30 turbines there. If the First Minister gets his way, you will be building another 8,000 to 10,000. The issue is not necessarily what you have now; it is what you propose to build in the next four to five years to achieve your renewables goals.

To answer your question about tourism, one turbine was put next to Royal Aberdeen Golf Club, and it caused such outrage that the chairman of the council's infrastructure services committee called for a six-month moratorium on future applications. You are going to see a lot more of that across Scotland.

Graham Lang: I will reply directly to what Mr MacKenzie said. The dancing ladies on Gigha are fine: three turbines that fit in very well and generate electricity for the island's electrical needs. The turbines on Eigg are also embedded in the local network. That is acceptable although, when the wind does not blow and the rain does not fall, Eigg has no wind or hydro and must start up its diesel generators, as it is not on the national grid.

Some turbines on Lewis and Shetland are absolutely acceptable, but not on the proposed scale. I would support turbines if they were embedded in the local network to provide electricity and benefits for the local communities, which are big on Lewis and Shetland.

The Convener: Patrick Harvie has a question on tourism.

Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green): Good morning, gentlemen. I will follow up on Chic Brodie's point about the coexistence of the tourism industry and renewables. He mentioned Royal St George's Golf Club, which has—I think that George Sorial used the term—an industrial power station next to it. I have here a picture of the defunct coal power plant and one older turbine, which are clearly visible from one of the holes on the golf course. Despite this view, the golf course somehow miraculously managed to attract a succession of international events. I put it to the panel that, if people do not like the look of something on the horizon, perhaps they just do not look at it.

Donald Trump: If they do not like the look, they go to a different country or a different place. There is certainly nothing very attractive about that view.

Patrick Harvie: The golf course attracted a succession of events, including open championships—14 in total, including one last year.

Donald Trump: What you showed me is certainly not an asset, I can tell you.

George Sorial: Those things have been there for a long time; they have not recently been erected. We are talking about structures that will be 650ft—65 storeys—high just a mile and a half off our coastline. Do you believe that people's eyes will not be drawn to them?

Patrick Harvie: I believe that what is in the picture is compatible with a golf course that attracted a succession of international events over many years.

J Mark Gibson: The things in that picture do not have moving blades that attract the eye.

Patrick Harvie: The turbines—

The Convener: You have made your point, Mr Harvie.

Mr Gibson, briefly, please.

J Mark Gibson: I agree that a proper up-to-date and independent survey is needed. That need has come out clearly from various comments this morning. We do not have enough written evidence. We have the evidence of Mr Trump, which is the evidence of an operator—in a way, that is the best evidence, as operators know their market. However, we need evidence for occasions such as this.

In my experience, there has been a shift. At the beginning—four, five, six or seven years ago—many people were prepared to accept the effect of wind turbines on the landscape because they believed that wind turbines were good for the country's energy security and, more important, that they were important for the battle against

climate change and important for the environment. Since then, and at an increasing rate, hardly a fortnight goes by without a professional engineering body, a financial body, or another type of body saying that the policy will not work. If people think that they are being asked to put up with something that just enriches foreign companies and does not help the environment, it very much affects their attitude to wind farms. That is why an up-to-date survey is needed.

The Convener: I would like to move on to a different subject. Mr Trump, I read your submission to the committee's inquiry, in which you detailed your concerns about the proposed offshore wind development in Aberdeenshire. There are a number of comments in the submission to which I would like to draw your attention. In the submission you say that

"The Scottish Government has an obligation to honor its contracts",

and that

"Scotland ... at the very highest ministerial level ... encouraged me with overwhelming promises, public statements, and various offers to support."

What promises were made to you? When were they made, and who made them?

Donald Trump: When I first came to Scotland—by the way, my mother was born on the Isle of Lewis, so I know something about Scotland—I had an option to buy a piece of land and I was going to buy it. When I heard that a big wind farm was going to be built off the land, which covers almost 2,000 acres, I said, "That's okay, but I'm not going to build there." At that time, I spoke to Jack McConnell, who was your First Minister.

Believe it or not, people were talking about the dunes, which I so cherish, which we now call the great dunes of Scotland and which are getting all these great awards. We have been very careful environmentally and have done a very environmentally sensitive job. We said, "That's okay if you want to build the wind farm, because we're not going to build here—we're going to go to another place. We won't buy this land and we'll go someplace else."

We had a great piece of land in Ireland, although it was not my first choice. You may remember that there was a big hoop-la because I was going to leave and build in Ireland, because a wind farm would be built fairly near the piece of land on which we were to build our course in Scotland.

Jack McConnell said that the wind farm would not be built. His people told George Sorial or various of my people that it would not happen. They said that the Ministry of Defence would never approve it—that had something to do with radar—

and they talked about shipping lanes. They said that, especially because the site was near Aberdeen, the wind farm would not happen. The proposal was very prevalent for a short time and then it totally disappeared. Nothing was in writing but, on that basis, I decided to go forward.

Toward the beginning of the process, when I discussed the issue with Alex Salmond, he pooh-poohed the proposal and said, "You have a Ministry of Defence problem and all sorts of shipping lane problems—I wouldn't worry about it." I continued to go forward. I have now invested tens of millions of pounds and I have completed my site ahead of schedule. I have built something that is spectacular—even my enemies say that it is the most spectacular site. The development is really good and will be great for Scotland, for Aberdeen and for everything.

After I have invested a tremendous amount of money, this really obnoxious and ugly wind farm appears all of a sudden. It is worse than a wind farm, because it will have all these different-looking windmills—it will look like a bad version of Disneyland. I felt betrayed, because I invested my money on the basis of statements that were made to me.

Just a short time ago, on 12 April, I got a letter from Alex Salmond that said:

"As I explained, the policies of one government do not bind its successor."

He is saying that, if Jack McConnell or people in his Administration told me that the wind farm would not happen, the current Government is not bound by that.

A lot of very smart people with a lot of money are looking to invest in different parts of the world. When they see what happened to me and the way that I have been treated, they will not invest in Scotland. It is stated that what one Administration says is not binding, but I had to rely on what was said. Jack McConnell and his representatives told us that the development would not happen. It went away and I built and invested all this money, but then it re-emerged. That is not fair to an investor.

The Convener: It is clear that it was of great importance to you that the development did not go ahead and affect your golf course.

Donald Trump: I said that it was fine if the development went ahead, but that I would build in Ireland, and all of a sudden, the development disappeared.

The Convener: If the issue was so important to you, why did you not seek more than a verbal assurance?

Donald Trump: I did not think that doing that was necessary, because people had talked about

the Ministry of Defence, which totally opposes the Vattenfall wind farm, as you know, and about shipping lanes. Those issues have always been a big problem.

The Ministry of Defence has recently come out totally against the Vattenfall wind farm. I feel very good about that, but I was told about that a while ago, so I did not feel that pursuing the issue was necessary. Alex Salmond mentioned the same issues. When I am told that the Ministry of Defence is against the development, what do I need to do?

People lured me in and I spent the money, and now I might regret that. Other people who want to invest in Scotland are watching me and what happened and I think that they will say, "I'm not going to invest in Scotland."

10:45

The Convener: When you proposed the development, back in 2006-07, we were in a different economic climate. A development that looked economically viable then might look different today. It has been suggested that you have changed your mind about the development and are looking for an excuse to withdraw, and that this is just a face-saving exercise. How do you respond to that?

Donald Trump: Even Alex Salmond was quoted today—in *The Times*, I think—as saying that he is satisfied with what we have done.

Look, I have invested tens of millions of pounds with no debt—I have no debt on the site; you can check—no mortgage, no financing, no nothing, unlike most other projects, which are going down the tubes and are going bust. I have invested tens of millions of pounds in my site on the North Sea coast, which is close to 2,000 acres. I have created something magnificent—something that some people, including me, consider to be the best golf course anywhere in the world. That is what I said that I would do, because we had the canvas on which to do it. I am looking forward to proceeding with the job. I want to build a hotel. I want to build further. I do not want to stop.

We are a rich and substantial organisation. This is a small job for me. It is an important job for me—my mother was born in Scotland—but it is not a big job. Having these 11 windmills, all different colours, styles and looks, a mile away from the development is a horrendous idea. That reminds me—when I first got involved, the site was 10 miles away, then it was 3 miles away, now it is 1 mile away. As Mr Gibson told me a little while ago, 1 mile is not even on the coast, it is really on the land, because each of the 11 windmills—each one different—is the equivalent of a 10-storey building.

There is not a man or woman on the council who would not feel how I feel. I made an investment because of the beauty of the site and the views and then, after I spent my money, this atrocious plan was announced.

I have to tell you one other thing. Wind is not a good form of energy and it does not work without subsidy. That is just an observation that I make as a businessman who has done well. You have to be careful because, if the UK ever takes away your subsidy, you have got some major problems on your hands.

The Convener: Thank you, Mr Trump. Other members want to come in on this line of questioning, but I have one final question that I think that it is only fair to put to you. As I am sure that you are aware, Jack McConnell—the former First Minister, now Lord McConnell—and the current First Minister, Mr Salmond, deny that they ever gave you those assurances.

Donald Trump: I have heard that and I know that Mr Salmond is denying other things on today's front pages, not related to this particular problem.

The Convener: Why should we believe you and not them?

Donald Trump: Because, hey, Mr Salmond is denying other things today. They even said that I wanted windmills. Somebody came out and said that. Who would want them? I never wanted them. I was always opposed to them. The Scottish Government asked me if I would write a letter about wind farms in appropriate locations. Yes—if it wants to put them in industrial areas, that is fine. I think that they are bad only because they are going to lose money. I believe in hydro—I think that hydro for Scotland is great and that you should expand your hydro energy. I think wave technology is great and that you should expand that. However, I think that you are going to destroy your coastline with wind power.

Jack McConnell gave me assurances. Alex Salmond scoffed at the idea of windmills being placed at the site during a dinner in New York—Mr Sorial was there.

George Sorial: I was there.

Donald Trump: We had dinner. We talked for hours. We talked about windmills. Who would believe that we did not talk about windmills? If I had known that there were going to be windmills at the site, I would have built in Ireland instead. It is very simple.

Patrick Harvie: Mr Trump, you say that you were given those assurances. The former First Minister and the current First Minister say that that was not the case. This committee cannot resolve that issue, as it involves one person's word against another.

We know that you do not like the wind project, but I would like to probe a little further the other things that you have said today. You said that you had the option to buy the land and then you heard that there would be the wind development. You expressed the view that you just would not buy the land and your development would not be built, then you were given assurances about the European offshore wind deployment centre.

Donald Trump: The wind farm disappeared, amazingly, because they wanted my money. They wanted me to invest in Scotland, which is the right thing.

Patrick Harvie: Can I finish?

Donald Trump: Yes.

Patrick Harvie: You bought the land after you were given that assurance.

Donald Trump: Yes.

Patrick Harvie: The Registers of Scotland shows that you had date of entry on the land in January 2006. In February 2006 you sought advice from Scottish Development International about the wind farm, which you described as a "deal killer". By that time you had already acquired the bulk of the land for £4.5 million. On 21 February 2006, SDI, following discussions with you, sent an e-mail that stated that

"the client, whose name must remain confidential at this stage, is about to conclude within the next few days a deal on a ... tourism/leisure resort of international standing".

In the next few days after 21 February, you bought the land.

Donald Trump: I was given assurances prior to my buying the land and, frankly—

Patrick Harvie: Prior to January 2006.

Donald Trump: Yes. I was given—

Patrick Harvie: When?

Donald Trump: I do not know. You are talking about many years ago. However, I was given assurances to a point where I felt I could go ahead and buy the land because I did not think that the wind farm would happen. By the time that I bought the land, I did not think that the wind farm would happen.

Patrick Harvie: So why, following discussions with you, did SDI describe the wind farm as a "deal killer"?

Donald Trump: I do not know. Perhaps it was continuing a bit, but I felt confident by the time that I bought the land that the wind farm would not happen. I felt that for a lot of different reasons, including that I had heard that the Ministry of Defence was against it, which meant a lot to me. However, I felt quite confident by the time that I

bought the land that the wind farms would not happen.

Patrick Harvie: You are a wealthy enough man to be able to afford a lawyer—

George Sorial: Mr Harvie, what is your point?

Patrick Harvie: —to explain to you that it would have been completely outrageous and improper for our First Minister to give such an assurance for the future about a planning application or energy development that did not exist.

Donald Trump: I do not think so at all. Frankly, the First Minister, Alex Salmond, too, wanted me very much to invest in Scotland and for a lot of good and not bad reasons. They want me to put hundreds of—

Patrick Harvie: But such an assurance would have prejudiced his legal obligations.

Donald Trump: Excuse me. They want me to put hundreds of millions of pounds into Scotland. What is not right is to get them to do something and then they go against their word. Go ahead, Mr Lang.

Graham Lang: I want to come in here because I think that this line of questioning is absolutely ludicrous. This is not the Trump inquiry; it is to do with renewable energy and the Government's targets. These attacks on Mr Trump are completely out of order.

The Convener: These questions have come up, Mr Lang, because of comments that were made in Mr Trump's written submission to the committee. It is quite legitimate for the committee to raise questions about them. However, I do not want to dwell on this aspect. Mr McMillan has a brief question and, if there is time, I will allow Maureen Watt to ask a brief question, too.

Stuart McMillan (West Scotland) (SNP): Mr Trump, in the final sentence in the second paragraph on page 6 of your written evidence, you say:

"If I had known about the current wind turbine proposals, I would never have built in Scotland."

However, you said a few moments ago that you did know about them. Which of the—

Donald Trump: No. I knew about them, but I did not think that they would happen, because I was led to believe that they would not happen.

Stuart McMillan: So you knew about them, but in your written statement you said, "If I had known", which implies that you did not know.

Donald Trump: No—if I had known that they were going to build them. Years ago, when I was going to buy, there was talk about a wind farm. I said, "That's okay. Build it, but I'm not buying." By

the time that I bought, I felt secure and I felt secure for a period of time. Then, all of a sudden, after the money was invested—in other words, they got me to come in, I invested my money, I built something magnificent, beyond what I said I would do. It opens on 10 July—I had to bring that up. It could open now, because we are ahead of schedule.

What happened was that after I had invested tremendous amounts of money in the project and completed it, all of a sudden the wind farm started to come. Now, it started to come before I completed, but it really emerged after I started investing a tremendous amount of money. Now we are stuck with this terrible Vatten-fool project. It is terrible. It is a terrible way to treat a person investing tens of millions of pounds in Scotland.

Stuart McMillan: So what you have said this morning is factually accurate, but what you put in your written submission is not totally accurate. Is that correct?

Donald Trump: I think they sort of mesh, don't they?

Stuart McMillan: No, they differ.

George Sorial: You are splitting hairs. Our opposition to wind power is well documented and well known. If you do any quick research, you will find articles from early 2006 that are identical to the ones that are being written today. Mr Trump's point is that, had we known that the proposals would go forward, we would never have done the project. You are splitting hairs; your point does not make any sense.

Mr Harvie asked about the e-mail from SDI. Why does he not ask SDI that question? It wrote the e-mail. The e-mail was not to us; it was from SDI to the Scottish Government. It is not reasonable for Mr Harvie to ask us to speculate on what SDI meant by what it said. That is absolutely ridiculous.

The Convener: I think that it is fair to let Mr Harvie respond briefly to that.

Patrick Harvie: The point that I was making was that, following discussions with the Trump Organization, SDI was clearly under the impression that the deal was about to be completed in a few days.

George Sorial: That is hearsay—

The Convener: Mr Sorial, will you please let Mr Harvie ask his question?

Patrick Harvie: On 21 February 2006, following discussions with yourselves, SDI wrote an e-mail that indicated that it was clearly under the impression that the deal would be completed in a few days.

George Sorial: That is hearsay. Were we copied in on that e-mail? It was an e-mail from SDI to the Scottish Government. Why would you even bring it up? It has no bearing on this hearing. That is ridiculous.

The Convener: Maureen Watt wants to ask a question. I ask her to be brief.

Maureen Watt (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP): Thank you very much, convener. As this is my first appearance at the committee, I indicate that I have no interests to declare.

From 2006 until the last election, I was a regional member for North East Scotland. I have followed both projects and have been to all the consultation meetings for both projects. I have with me the timelines for both projects. The wind farm project has been on the go since 2002. In 2005-06, there were 20 public consultations in towns along the coast of Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire. You purchased your property in March 2006. From 2006 until 2009, the wind farm project was developing. It got European backing and became the European offshore wind deployment centre. All along, you have known—

The Convener: Ms Watt, can you ask a brief question, please?

Maureen Watt: —that both projects were continuing and you had a chance to pull out, but you did not. Why not?

Donald Trump: I do not think that that is correct. The Vattenfall project came in much later than that. We certainly did not know about it, just as Royal Aberdeen Golf Club did not know about it. It did not know that a windmill was going to be built right next to its course until it was built. I certainly did not know that.

George Sorial: And your First Minister consistently led us to believe that, because of issues with shipping lanes going to the harbour and MOD radar issues, the proposal would never go forward. Any reasonable person who got assurances based on those grounds from the head of a Government would feel that they could certainly rely on them. That is exactly what happened here.

Maureen Watt: All those projects were being worked out locally—

The Convener: Thank you, Ms Watt. We had to address that issue, as it was an important one, but we now need to move on to broader issues of policy.

John Park (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab): I will take us into an area that we have touched on a little. It is about the alternatives for meeting the targets that the Government has set. In no

evidence session of our inquiry that we have had so far, including this morning's session, have we heard anyone make any complaint about the renewable energy targets that the Scottish Government has set and the rationale behind them. I would appreciate it if you could give us an idea of your organisations' thinking about how we might meet those targets if we are not to include energy from wind, whether onshore or offshore, which you have concerns about?

J Mark Gibson: I do not see the point of having a policy that is based on targets for percentages of renewable energy; in fact, that is a very dangerous way to go ahead. What will that achieve? It will not achieve energy security, because the wind does not blow all the time. As far as we know, it will not achieve any environmental outcomes. As I said earlier, it could result in greater levels of CO₂ than there would be if there were no wind turbines. I mention wind turbines because that is the only technology that has a chance of being able to meet the 2020 targets. There has been no empirical evidence whatever about levels of CO₂ reduction or increase. We have had no cost-benefit analysis. What is the policy for? It is not for security; it is not for the environment.

11:00

I will tell members a shocking story about a recent application. We have three sites of special scientific interest next to us. Every winter, between 47 and 50 pairs of whooper swans nest there, and during the daytime they migrate between the loch and a smaller loch, which is in the centre of a wind farm application site. I asked the developer whether he was aware of the whooper swans. He said, "Oh yeah, no problem. We're going to drain the loch on our land." That is a typical attitude.

Bats get sucked into the low-pressure vacuum. They cannot escape and their lungs literally implode. For what? For nothing. Scottish Natural Heritage says that it supports Government policy, but I have written correspondence from SNH that says that it has no evidence that wind farms do anything worth while and nor has it sought evidence—the same thing comes from Historic Scotland. It is policy for policy's sake, with no clear outcomes and no evidence.

Donald Trump: From a practical standpoint, I think that your CO₂ targets are absolutely ridiculous. China, from where you buy your unattractive industrial turbines, is decimating the atmosphere—it is decimating what is going on up in the air—and your targets are less than 1 per cent, if that. Here you are, destroying the financial wellbeing of Scotland to meet phoney and totally random CO₂ targets, and a country that is making your turbines—by the way, China loves making turbines for Scotland and getting Scotland to pay it

a lot of money—is doing so much damage to the atmosphere that there is nothing at all that you can do to bring it back through your so-called wind initiative.

Renewables: fine. Wind: fine, if it is in the right and proper location. However, for you to be setting targets, when China and certain other countries are decimating the atmosphere, is foolhardy.

Chic Brodie: Like the United States.

Donald Trump: Perhaps like the US, yes.

George Sorial: Wind has failed all over the United States. It has failed everywhere.

Donald Trump: By the way, I have to say this: you are 20 years behind the times, because other countries are giving up industrial turbines and going to other forms of energy. Wind farms all over the world are being abandoned. As soon as the Government stops subsidising them, the wind farms do not work, because they are very poor, so people are not doing them.

The Convener: I remind members to speak through the chair.

John Park: Mr Lang, you started talking about alternatives earlier. Will you elaborate on what you were saying?

Graham Lang: May I correct one thing? Wind is not an alternative; it is an additional source of electricity. That has to be understood. It is not an alternative because, as you all know, it is intermittent and requires back-up. When turbines are generating, the back-up is ticking over. When they are not working, which is at least 70 per cent of the time, nuclear, gas and coal provide our electricity.

I mentioned the sustainable energy hierarchy: demand reduction; energy efficiency; and renewable micro-energy—combined heat and power, heat pumps, solar and wind, and small-scale and community renewables, in relation to which there can be reinvestment locally for projects up the hierarchy, for heat and for electricity. The important point is that most effort and funding should go into the higher levels of the hierarchy, where efforts will be most effective at reducing emissions and fuel poverty.

On thorium, we are being left behind by the USA, China, India and Australia, which all have research programmes. The reaction is not a runaway chain reaction, so it does not require a pressurised reactor. The raw material is readily available from western countries and is abundant. An external source is required to begin a reaction, so a reactor can be shut down immediately. There is no significant radioactivity, and the heat at the reactor is only 400° centigrade. Very small

reactors can be safely built. That is all that I have to say about alternatives.

John Park: Can I get one clarification before I move on to my final question? Mr Trump made the position of his organisation clear—he believes that our energy targets are probably unachievable and that we should not have set them. What is the position of Communities Against Turbines on the Scottish Government's energy targets?

Graham Lang: You will see from our submission that we accept the figures that SNH produced: that with what has been built, gained consent, is in the pipeline—and perhaps at the scoping and screening stage—the targets should be met. However, as SNH has also said, it is going to be more—

John Park: Do you support the targets?

Graham Lang: No.

John Park: Right. That is fine. I just wanted to clarify that.

J Mark Gibson: What are the targets for? Are they for energy? Are they for job creation? Are they for the environment? It seems to change every week. What are the targets for?

Donald Trump: The job creation is jobs in China, because China is where they make the windmills.

The Convener: I think we have already heard that point, Mr Trump, thank you.

John Park: That point is relevant to my final question about the nature of employment in Scotland over the years. There has been a lot of demographic change. Scotland has been a manufacturing country and we hope that it will be one again.

We have had some bad news about Doosan lately, but a whole host of companies—Gamesa, Samsung, BiFab, Scottish and Southern Energy—are investing in Scotland, particularly looking at offshore wind. They will provide high-quality manufacturing jobs. To return to the premise of my earlier question, it is about meeting our renewables targets, but it is also about our country's reindustrialisation. If we do not reindustrialise, what are the alternatives? Employment in tourism or other sectors?

J Mark Gibson: How are we reindustrialising? The Government also talks about investment: £750 million or billion or whatever it is. That money is not coming into Scotland. It is buying foreign-manufactured wind turbines that are installed by companies that are about 85 per cent foreign-owned. Where are the jobs and the local investment? They are not there. Our nearest wind farm has 60 turbines. Scottish Power is owned by

Iberdrola, a Spanish company. Every single construction worker was Spanish.

At the public inquiry, the developer was claiming ever more jobs every single day—by the end, up to 120 long-term jobs. We were taken to a site during the inquiry report process. The reporter asked Scottish Power—the site operator—how many jobs there were on the 60 turbine site. The answer was three jobs. The reporter asked if the people were all employed there. They were not—they spread their time between four different wind farms—so there was less than one job at that wind farm. Job creation is a cruel bribe to people desperate for jobs, because it is a false one.

What are the targets for? They are not for employment, the environment or energy security. What are they there for?

Graham Lang: In theory, the targets are there to export electricity. Of course, that is a pretty impossible card to call at this stage. We do not know where the market will be—or whether there will be a market. How do we know that the English will queue up to buy our renewable electricity when they will probably have some of their own? They have an agreement with Ireland to import all their renewable wind from offshore, off the west coast of Ireland—if that project is ever built. Basically, if there is no market for something, it cannot be exported—so what is the point in making a product if you are not absolutely certain that it can be exported?

Angus MacDonald (Falkirk East) (SNP): First, before I get to my question, I will correct Mr Trump. A couple of minutes ago, you said that we were 20 years behind the times with regard to wind energy. I draw to your attention our Nordic cousins, particularly Norway, which has plans to significantly increase the number of onshore wind turbines throughout the country. If we are 20 years behind the times, so is Norway.

Donald Trump: That is not what I am hearing about Norway, I have to say. Germany, Spain and other countries are abandoning wind because they cannot afford to subsidise it. Obviously Spain has economic problems; it has already announced that it cannot subsidise wind any longer and the wind farms are closing down. You have to be very careful.

I have just returned from the country of Georgia, which is considered to be one of the great achievements of the past 10 or 15 years. In fact, leaders of other countries are going to see what the president of Georgia and his people have done. It is amazing. However, when I asked him about wind, he did not even want to talk about it. He thought it was ridiculous. Instead, he has gone almost 100 per cent hydro. Hydro is a fabulous source of energy. It is not intermittent; you can

turn it off any time you want; and, given the tremendous water resources in Scotland, I recommend that the committee seriously study it. When the president of Georgia gave me their highest honour, the medal of excellence, for the things that I have done—it was a great honour for me—we had a long discussion about the matter, and I found out that Georgia is almost 100 per cent hydro. It is efficient and self-sufficient and I really believe that the committee should look at this great form of energy that does not ruin the environment.

Angus MacDonald: I certainly take on board your comments about hydro, but I do not think that Scotland needs any lessons in that respect. In fact, we were ahead of the game with it.

Donald Trump: You need more hydro. You are right to say that you do not need any lessons about it, but you certainly need more of it.

Angus MacDonald: We need a mix.

Donald Trump: You do not need a mix—you need more hydro.

Chic Brodie: He's an expert.

Angus MacDonald: As you might be aware—and, indeed, as my colleague John Park has mentioned—Gamesa and BiFab, to name just two manufacturers, have made significant investment in the Arnish fabrication yard on your beloved Isle of Lewis.

J Mark Gibson: On a point of clarification, Gamesa has only declared an intention to make that investment. That is not quite the same as making it.

Angus MacDonald: Perhaps not, but—

Donald Trump: And a Korean company that was going to invest has also pulled out.

Angus MacDonald: I am trying to concentrate on your beloved Isle of Lewis, from which your mother hails. BiFab has announced a significant investment in the Arnish fabrication yard, bringing jobs to an island that is desperately in need of work. At this point, I should declare that I hail from the Isle of Lewis and come from the other side of Stornoway from your people.

Donald Trump: I knew I liked you.

Angus MacDonald: In fact, the place I come from is about 5 miles from the village where your mother was born, so we have at least one thing in common.

Since you arrived in Scotland, you have continually rubbished polls showing that the majority of Scots are in favour of wind farms; I was curious to hear those comments. A recent YouGov poll showed that almost three quarters of Scots

support wind power as part of our energy mix and, this morning, we were handed a poll showing that, as a result of your comments, 93 per cent of Scots polled are either more supportive of wind power or are unchanged in their views and 85 per cent believe that the Scottish Government should place little or no weight on your views when making decisions on energy policy. What is your view on that poll?

Donald Trump: It all depends on how the poll is worded. I saw a poll today that said that 53 per cent of people wanted wind power, but the question was something like, "Would you like efficient, wonderful windmills?". Of course the answer will be yes. No one knows more about polls than I do; in fact, if you want to hear about polls, I had 93 per cent approval for my project when people were fighting me on it.

In the poll that I saw, the question was: "Would you agree that very efficient windmills should be built?" A lot of these polls do not mention wind energy; instead, they ask about renewables, which is a very nice word. If you did a straight-up poll with people who have experienced the disaster of these industrial turbines being built near their houses and in their communities, you would get a tremendous negative result.

I have read the polls and seen the wording. Anybody would vote in favour of turbines—I almost did. However, the fact is that if you did a straight-up poll and asked only the people who have been affected by industrial turbines, a vast majority of people would reject them. Scotland should reject them for another reason, which is that you cannot afford it.

11:15

Graham Lang: I simply comment that we do not do government by polls.

The Convener: We do elections by polls, though.

Graham Lang: Yes, we do.

When we look at the polls in the Moffat centre report, the report by VisitScotland and one or two other reports, we should look not at the support, but at the negatives. Huge percentages of people—upwards of 20 or 25 per cent—support the idea that wind farms would ruin the landscape and would have an adverse effect on tourism. They would not like to see a wind turbine out of their bedroom window. Those are all statements that have been made in the polls that I have read over the years. The important figure is the negative one—the percentage of those who do not agree with what the poll is trying to bring out, which is broad support for renewable energy. It will be important if 20 per cent of the people who visit

Scotland decide that, because they do not like turbines and they wreck the landscape, they will not come back again. That is the most important figure, not the 80 per cent who say that turbines are okay.

J Mark Gibson: Most people are well intentioned and would love to support turbines if they believed in them. However, this is a dangerous time, because people are coming to realise that they have been conned.

George Sorial: Speaking about polls, I do not know whether members have seen today's *Press and Journal*, which says that, in a poll that has just been done, 62 per cent of those who were surveyed think that Scotland needs to take a look at its policies for the approval of turbines, with another 10 per cent saying that they are not sure about turbines. That is a powerful statistic.

I cannot resist pointing out that my mother is from Bragar on Lewis and that I spent many summer holidays up there. I love Scotland.

Angus MacDonald: Very good. I have just one point—

The Convener: Can we have a brief final question, please?

Angus MacDonald: Yes.

Mr Trump, or the Trump Organization, and CATS choose to ignore the polls that came out earlier in the week. That is clearly a case of—

George Sorial: Aside from those polls—

The Convener: Please speak through the chair and do not interrupt the questioner.

Angus MacDonald: It is clearly a case of, "My mind is made up; do not confuse me with the facts." Last year, we had the biggest poll of all. As you know, the SNP campaigned strongly in the election campaign on a policy of delivering the equivalent of 100 per cent of electricity from renewables. Surely you agree that the overwhelming vote for the current Government was a vindication of the public support for the renewable energy policy and that it is you who is out of touch with public opinion.

Donald Trump: Excuse me, but that is because the public were not given the facts by you or by Alex Salmond. If Alex Salmond was smart, he would stop this right now, because what is going to happen to Scotland will be terrible. It is the same thinking that gave you al-Megrahi. They let him out of prison in order to—*[Interruption.]* It is true. It is the exact same thinking.

The Convener: Mr Trump, please—

Donald Trump: They said that he would be dead within two weeks. Well—guess what?—he was seen running in the park last week.

The Convener: The topic is broad enough already without bringing up Mr Megrahi.

I will let Mr Lang give a brief response to the question on polls.

Graham Lang: Mr MacDonald mentioned the Scottish National Party's resounding result at the election. That was based on a turnout of about 52 per cent and 23 or 24 per cent of the vote, so I do not think that it gives the SNP a mandate to trash Scotland.

Claire Baker (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab): As this is the first time that I have been at the committee, I confirm that I have no registrable interests to declare.

Claims about subsidy levels have been made. Do the witnesses accept that all our energy resources receive subsidy and that the subsidy that goes to renewables is lower than that which goes to coal, gas or oil? That is just part of our energy system.

Donald Trump: We are not discussing the subsidy of other things. You will have to look at that yourself. We are just saying that wind turbines do not work without massive Government subsidy, which means higher taxes. When you really look at it, you will find that, without subsidies, wind turbines do not work. When the subsidies end, which I think will be soon, wind farms all over Scotland and elsewhere will be abandoned. That is not a pretty picture.

J Mark Gibson: The race to build wind farms has nothing to do with the environment, CO₂ and jobs; rather, it is all to do with the subsidies that can be gained from the process. At least half of the panel is about communities. Could we go back a little bit to the effect on communities?

The Convener: I would rather stick with the same line of questioning. If we have time later, we will come back to that.

Claire Baker: It has been claimed this morning that renewables and particularly wind facilities could not survive without subsidies. Do you accept that more traditional fossil fuel energy sources receive greater levels of subsidy than renewables?

Donald Trump: No, they do not.

Claire Baker: That is factually correct.

Donald Trump: They do not need subsidies.

Claire Baker: They do. In 2010, £3.63 billion was spent on coal, oil and gas subsidies, whereas £1.4 billion was spent on renewables. A greater

balance was spent on those subsidies. We are trying to shift the focus away from—

J Mark Gibson: You cannot compare those at all, because—

The Convener: Will people speak through the chair, please? Hold on a second. Claire Baker, you finish your question.

Claire Baker: We are trying to shift the focus away from expendable fossil fuel sources of energy to cleaner, renewable energy to try to meet our energy targets in the long-term for Scotland. That is what the committee is trying to look at.

J Mark Gibson: You talk about £3.7 billion, I think, going to gas, coal or whatever and £1.4 billion going to wind, but that £3.7 billion produces 98 per cent of our energy. The £1.4 billion contributes a minute amount of energy. In terms of value for money, wind subsidy is therefore grotesquely expensive. It is not a matter of headline amounts; it is a matter of the amount per unit of energy generated.

Claire Baker: Do you accept that earlier questions have highlighted that we cannot continue in Scotland with the energy sources that we currently have, that we need to look to other sources of energy, and that the investment in renewables is about trying to take us to that place?

J Mark Gibson: I am all for that—

The Convener: Hold on. Let Mr Sorial answer, as he has not had a chance yet.

George Sorial: Renewables have to work. The matter is very simple. You are spending £250,000 of subsidies to generate £150,000 of energy. Who is paying for that £100,000? Your taxpayers are. How long will they put up with that? Renewables are fine, but they have to work. Wind does not work.

Donald Trump: Claire Baker mentioned expendable fuel, meaning, for example, coal. Those fuel sources are expended and used up. If a windmill was built, it lasted for 1,000 years and lots of money did not have to be spent on it, that would be one thing, but those things are being decimated by the environment—by salt water, wind and rain, and other problems. I have never seen that written about or heard it discussed. In fact, there is a big story today that the foundations and footings of the windmills in the ocean are not holding up. I am sure that the insurance companies will be happy to hear that. Those plants have to be rebuilt every four or five years. Who will do that? New windmills will have to be put up every four, five or 10 years. They are machines and they do not last.

It has been said that billions of dollars are being spent. Do you know how many windmills I hear that people want to put up in Scotland? Nine thousand; or more—that is a low number. In five years, when Alex Salmond, other people and perhaps members here are gone and those things are decimated by conditions, who will rebuild them? Who will put up brand new ones? They are machines that have to be replaced. We are talking about a massive amount of money. What will happen in five years when new windmills have to be put up? Who will pay for them?

Claire Baker: All energy sectors face exactly the same challenges.

The Convener: We will move on. John Wilson has a question.

John Wilson (Central Scotland) (SNP): Thank you, convener. I welcome the panel.

I want to follow up on Claire Baker's line of questioning. A figure that she did not mention is the £2.9 billion that the UK Government is expending on decommissioning nuclear power stations. The committee's inquiry is to look at the wider renewables obligations targets that the Scottish Government has set itself. It is not only the Scottish Government that is looking at renewables; looking at alternatives to fossil fuels and providing sustainable energy in the future is part of the UK, European and worldwide agendas.

Mr Trump has made reference several times to industrial turbines. Could the representatives of CATS, particularly Mr Lang, with his aforementioned links with community turbine group forums—I think he said that he was involved in three such groups—talk about the benefits that those communities are getting from having wind turbines sited in their vicinity? What would be the reaction of those communities if the turbines were turned off and the real community benefits that the communities receive were no longer there?

Graham Lang: I think that I spoke quite quickly when I gave my opening statement. I said that I was a member of two community benefit forums. Those are the forums that are set up by developers before the planning process to discuss with members of the community how community benefit could be managed, if the communities were to be offered such a benefit.

I went along the first time out of curiosity, as I had objected to the wind farm that the community benefit forum was concerned with. Of course, whether one was for or against the wind farm, that did not get away from the fact that, if the application were successful, there would be a community benefit, and that was something for which a mechanism had to be put in place. There is a variety of offers on the market and some people see the issue as being helpful, while others

see it as being divisive. It splits the community, in a way. For my part, as a businessman, I wanted to ensure that, if the consent were granted, the benefits would trickle down to the community.

Highland Council has recently become involved in community benefit. It has gone out on a limb without consultation with communities or the industry and has produced a community benefit policy and concordat. It will negotiate with the developers and deal with the applications for funding and, where benefits are above a certain threshold, it will retain a portion of the funds. It says that the concordat has been agreed entirely without prejudice to the execution and implementation of the council's powers, duties and obligations as the local planning authority. In the opinion of CATS, there will be a substantial conflict of interest between determining wind farm developments and dealing with community benefit. In that regard, I refer you to what you were told by Chris Norman, the chair of Heads of Planning Scotland, who gave evidence to this committee previously.

Scottish Renewables wrote to Highland Council to say that it was critical of the council's model. The letter said, quite correctly:

"Community benefit contributions are not material planning considerations and, therefore, should not be discussed until after planning consent is achieved. In the interests of complete impartiality and fairness, Scottish Renewables would strongly argue that any community benefit payments be kept entirely separate from the planning process."

However, the advice from Scottish Renewables is ignored by its members, who start peddling beads for the natives a year or so before an application is made, and maybe two years before a decision is taken. That means that those who are keen to get the benefit, with a wish list of projects to get on with, could wait four years to see some of the benefit—of course, if the application is refused, they will see nothing.

J Mark Gibson: Community funds are a ridiculous diversion. It is the community's money in the first place. For every £100 of subsidy that every household in the country pays towards renewables subsidies, less than £1 comes back in the form of a community fund, and we are expected to be grateful.

Perhaps I should introduce a more positive note, because the procedure so far has been a little adversarial. It should not be so; instead, we should all be working in the best interests of Scotland, the environment and everyone who lives here. Instead of attacking each other, we should be sharing information in order to move forward.

I want to make two points. First, the rationale behind the targets is not clear. We need a whole-system study of the entire renewables process

and the reasons for it, because if it turns out that the reasons are good ones supported by evidence you will be able to carry the country with you and get communities behind you.

11:30

John Wilson: Part of the purpose of the committee's inquiry is to examine the targets and find out whether those that have been set are appropriate, whether the various technologies can deliver on them and so on.

J Mark Gibson: With all due respect, we do not have the expertise to conduct that whole-system survey. It must be carried out independently; indeed, we should all welcome that kind of independent study. After all, we are all after the truth and are not out to gain any particular advantage.

John Wilson: But—

J Mark Gibson: I ask the member to let me finish. For everyone's sake—certainly for the sake of the country—we need a proper independent study. It need not take long, but it must produce evidence on every aspect.

At the same time, we urgently need a review of the planning process. We come from communities that are concerned about turbines. Every day, those same communities read about professional organisations' doubts over the justification for these policies. Not carrying people with you is dangerous for democracy; people feel powerless and trampled on.

I will say one more thing and then you will hear no more from me. I feel very strongly about the views of communities. The whole legitimate object of Government is to do for a community of people whatever they need to have done but cannot do themselves. People are simple and powerless, but they have strong beliefs and great intentions. As one of Mr Trump's countrymen, a great, wise man, once said,

"If you once forfeit the confidence of your fellow citizens"

—if you have a policy that is not based on something that is true—

"you can never regain their respect and esteem. It is true that you may fool all of the people some of the time; you can even fool some of the people all of the time; but you can't fool all of the people all of the time."

That is the dangerous position we find ourselves in.

John Wilson: Mr Gibson, I refer you to the opinion poll that we received this morning.

J Mark Gibson: As the First Minister—

The Convener: Mr Gibson, please do not interrupt the question.

John Wilson: The opinion poll shows that, as Mr Lang said, 20 to 25 per cent of the population are concerned about wind turbines and 75 to 80 per cent are in favour of them. Moreover, as Mr MacDonald has mentioned, a poll that we received this morning shows that Mr Trump's intervention in the debate has hardened some communities' views in favour of wind turbines.

Mr Gibson, is your organisation called communities against wind turbines or communities concerned about turbines? You said that you were concerned about them, but my understanding of the organisation's *raison d'être* is that it is against turbines. What are you actually against? Are you against large-scale wind farms or farmers setting up small-scale projects to supplement their incomes? A large number of the 8,000 to 10,000 wind turbines that Mr Trump has referred to are part of small-scale, one-off or two-off projects that communities, farmers and companies have set up to generate renewable energy either for their own use or for supply to the grid.

J Mark Gibson: As you very well know, you can get whatever results you want from an opinion poll.

John Wilson: An election gave us a resounding result last year.

George Sorial: Election results can change if you put 10,000 turbines all over the country.

The Convener: You must speak through the chair, Mr Sorial.

J Mark Gibson: As the First Minister will agree, the detail of the question is key to getting the right response. Indeed, we have had the same debate over a couple of words with regard to the referendum.

If you want to talk about opinion polls, it was only a week ago that MORI carried out a poll for RenewableUK that showed that 80 per cent of people thought that wind turbines in the landscape were less than acceptable, and 16 per cent of that 80 per cent thought that they were completely unacceptable. You can get whatever result you want from a poll. However, polls and point scoring are not important. What is important is establishing beyond doubt what we are trying to achieve and what the evidence is. We do not have that at the moment. If we had the right evidence, everyone in this room would agree, but without it, you are imposing a policy on communities that are too vulnerable to protect themselves.

John Wilson: You did not answer my main question.

J Mark Gibson: Ask it again.

John Wilson: Is your organisation concerned about turbines or is it against turbines? What

turbine developments is your organisation against? I gave you two examples: industrial wind farms, and small-scale turbines that are erected by communities, farmers and others. Does your organisation have a blanket dislike of all turbines or is it in favour of some turbines but not others?

J Mark Gibson: I am totally unconvinced about what they can achieve. If we have turbines anywhere, it must be very clear that they do not damage other equally important interests in the country.

Graham Lang: I draw the member's attention to the First Minister's constituency in Buchan, which has almost ground to a standstill because of the number of applications, mostly from small farmers for big turbines. The same thing could apply to Mr Brodie's patch down in Galloway and South Ayrshire—it has been absolutely inundated with applications. Obviously, the amount of funding that applicants can get from the feed-in tariff is very attractive.

We are talking about a wholesale proliferation of turbines of all scales. The situation is out of order. It is a runaway train and the policy is not working.

The Convener: We are already over time. Four members have allocated time left and want to ask questions. I intend to take all four questions together and it would be helpful if the panel answered them together. The questions should be brief.

Stuart McMillan: Earlier in the inquiry, the committee received evidence from John Robertson, the managing director of BiFab, who said:

"We have a tremendous opportunity to create an industry. There is good technology and expertise out there and companies that can deliver."—[*Official Report, Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee*, 28 March 2012; c 1259.]

The renewables sector in Scotland already employs approximately 11,000 people, and £30 billion of future investment is forecast. Both organisations on the panel appear to want to stymie any potential job opportunities for individuals across Scotland. I find that staggering and difficult to understand.

The Convener: We will leave that hanging and move to Patrick Harvie.

Patrick Harvie: Very little has been said about climate change today. I direct my question to Communities Against Turbines Scotland because we already know Mr Trump's view. He recently wrote:

"Global warming has been proven to be a canard".

We understand his view. He disagrees with every single member of the Parliament, which voted for

radical action on a programme for reducing emissions. Does Communities Against Turbines Scotland take the same position? Some of your written evidence and website material suggests that you support the idea that decarbonisation should be a policy objective in energy.

In a submission for the Climate Change (Scotland) Bill, Mr Gibson wrote:

"There is increasing evidence that global warming is not actually happening ... It seems likely that Governments have been duped by the wind and global warming industries".

Does Mr Gibson stand by those words? Does CATS agree with Mr Trump in denying all mainstream science on climate change? If so, what is Mr Gibson's scientific qualification for doing so?

Mike MacKenzie: I am beginning to get the idea that the panel does not like wind energy.

Mr Trump, you might not know that, prior to being elected, I was a builder and developer for many years, although on a much, much smaller scale than you. I am going to be absolutely straight with you. I have spoken to dozens of people during the past few weeks since you got publicly involved in the debate. One thing that you may not know about the Scottish people is that, although we love to do business with you and we welcome your investment, we do not like being told what to do. We do not feel that your investment gives you licence to do that. I am concerned that your public efforts are perhaps counter-productive.

You mentioned that your mother comes from the island of Lewis. I am sure that you are as shocked as I am that fuel poverty on the island of Lewis is running at 50 per cent. Part of the Government's energy policy is to reduce energy consumption by 12 per cent. One way that we can do that is to insulate homes. It has been reported in the press that you intend to donate £10 million to the campaign against wind. I suggest that a much more effective intervention, if you cared to make it, would be to donate all or some of that money to tackling fuel poverty, perhaps on the island of Lewis. I would be happy to work with you on that.

The Convener: Graeme Pearson will ask the very last question, which I ask him to keep brief.

Graeme Pearson (South Scotland) (Lab): I will take the lead in terms of being brief.

First, I have a couple of declarations. To my knowledge, I have no family on the Isle of Lewis—I am probably the only person in Scotland in that position. Secondly, I should admit for my sins that I chaired the inaugural meeting of Communities Against Turbines Scotland last year. As a list

member for South Scotland, I was aware of the pressure on the communities there on the issue.

My question is for either Mr Lang or Mr Gibson. From their experience of developing and articulating their position over the past four or five years, do they feel that the Government has in place the mechanisms to hear the issues that they raise and to deal with the facts that cause them concern? Can they also reflect for us the range of communities that their membership represents?

The Convener: There is quite a lot to try to address. I suggest that we work our way along the panel, starting with Mr Lang. I ask members of the panel to pick up, briefly, on the points that are relevant.

Graham Lang: I will be as quick as I can be.

Mr Harvie mentioned climate change. I have read a tremendous amount about it, on both sides of the debate. I have been to see films, including Mr Gore's film, and have read many publications. I am completely puzzled. I do not know whether or not climate change is happening. James Lovelock, who wrote the Gaia theory, has just said that he does not think that it is that bad. I think that the jury is out on climate change.

Somebody asked why we do not like wind turbines. One reason is noise, which is a subject that should be at the forefront of every member's mind when they consider the effect that the turbines have on people. I will quote from a *British Medical Journal* article of 12 March—the authors were Chris Hanning and Professor Alun Evans. We have submitted four testimonies from people who are the victims of noise nuisance from wind farms. The *BMJ* article states:

“Shortly after wind turbines began to be erected close to housing, complaints emerged of adverse effects on health. Sleep disturbance was the main complaint. Such reports have been dismissed as being subjective and anecdotal, but experts contend that the quantity, consistency, and ubiquity of the complaints constitute epidemiological evidence of a strong link between wind turbine noise, ill health, and disruption of sleep. The noise emitted by a typical onshore 2.5 MW wind turbine has two main components”.

I will not repeat the details: it is the mechanical noise and the aerodynamic noise as the blades pass through the air. That produces an impulsive noise, which is variously—

The Convener: That is very interesting, but you will appreciate that we are very short of time. I ask you to address the questions that members asked.

Graham Lang: One of my comments was going to be that the guidance that is used in assessing turbines is completely out of date. I hope that you will take that on board.

What was the next question?

11:45

The Convener: You have dealt with the question about climate change. You were asked whether you felt that opposition to renewables was stymieing economic development.

Graham Lang: I know something about that, as I have been a minor industrialist. When I had my business in Glasgow and Babcock & Wilcox got a job for a new power station, we lost all our employees almost overnight, because Babcock & Wilcox paid better rates. The same thing could happen in the offshore industry. The impact will be quite bad on local businesses such as BiFab, which is a wonderful company—I have been round its works and it does what I used to do.

The problem is where the labour comes from. Is it trained? How will it be trained? I have no doubt that the offshore industry will produce a lot of jobs, but I do not think that enough planning is being done on where the people will come from. Will they live in labour camps, as happened when the oil production platforms were built? There are no houses for those 11,000, 20,000, 30,000 or 40,000 people.

J Mark Gibson: I will be as brief as I can be. The first point, which was from Stuart McMillan, was about jobs. When we address the policy, we must be clear about whether we are talking about job creation, climate change or energy security. That changes all the time. Of course—

Stuart McMillan: We can talk about all those aspects.

J Mark Gibson: Please do not interrupt. Of course we are in favour of job creation and of course we want the very best for Scotland, but we must be clear—we must carry out a whole-system survey to agree what we are aiming for and to know the science.

I was asked what my approach is. I have a science degree and I approach things wanting to find out the truth. We should all do that.

A lot of the evidence that has come out—particularly from professional bodies and engineers in recent months—does not support the present policy. We must not blind ourselves; we must listen to everybody and try to find the truth.

People have talked about Mr Trump's involvement. He cares very much about this country. From a money point of view, CATS is completely independent and has received no funds whatever, other than those that we have raised locally. The wind industry is 90 per cent foreign owned and it spends tens of millions of pounds on lobbying and public relations. People should put things in proportion.

The Convener: Will you address the climate change issue?

J Mark Gibson: We do not know about climate change. All that we know is that there is a lot of covering up and unprofessional behaviour. Why do people do that if they are sure of their ground?

Patrick Harvie: You said:

“There is increasing evidence that global warming is not ... happening”—

The Convener: Please do not interrupt the witnesses, Mr Harvie. We are over time.

J Mark Gibson: Let us work together. We should not be on two sides. We want the best for the country, the environment and Scotland’s people. Let us do a proper whole-system survey, which could be done in six months, and find the truth.

Donald Trump: First, I believe that climate change is not man-made. I take the view that many people take. We can look at global cooling and global warming. In the 1920s, there were many magazine covers about the big problem of the day, which was called global cooling. Now, we have global warming. I do not believe that it is man-made. You are spending billions of pounds unnecessarily in a way that will affect Scotland’s future.

Jobs are being created in other countries for your industrial turbines—I do not use the word “renewables” in that regard, because I feel strongly that some renewables are very good, as I have said. Very few jobs are being created here. Any jobs that are being created here will be more than offset by what will be lost in your most important industry, which is tourism. I feel strongly that you will lose tremendous numbers of jobs in tourism. The few jobs that will be created will be offset by a much larger loss of jobs in tourism.

I will describe an interesting thing that happened last week. We did not want to get into it too much, but this is an appropriate time to mention it. We got approval for a beautiful little staging area up front on the road, for a security house. It is beautiful and elegant and we have got nice compliments for it.

Everything was approved except for one thing: the flagpoles, which are a tenth of the size of the windmills. The reason the flagpoles were not approved was that they would

“have an unacceptable impact on the visual amenity of the area.”

They are one tenth of the size of those massive, ugly wind turbines.

We have a tremendous investment in the development. I would love to proceed with the development, but I cannot proceed with it if the

hotel is going to be looking at industrial turbines, and no one here would do so if they were in my position. If the Vattenfall job is terminated, I will immediately proceed with the hotel, and I am looking forward to doing that. I have to tell you that my project is a much bigger project than Vattenfall. We are talking about potentially £750 million for my project, when it is finished. I heard that Vattenfall was £60 million, then I heard £200 million—I see different numbers and I do not think that Vattenfall knows what the number is, if it even wants to build the project. I will start on the hotel immediately, if I hear that that horrendously located wind farm will not be built.

The Convener: Thank you, Mr Trump. Mr Sorial, do you want to add something?

George Sorial: Just because you were democratically elected does not mean that you have a right to unilaterally impose all your policies on your people, *carte blanche*. People all over Scotland are screaming in opposition to wind turbines. You cannot use the excuse, “We have been elected and we have a right to go forward.”

The Convener: Thank you, Mr Sorial. Given the time, we must draw matters to a close—

Patrick Harvie: On a point of order, convener.

The Convener: There are no points of order in this committee—[*Interruption.*] Okay.

Patrick Harvie: Standing orders allow points of order, convener. In a previous meeting in the inquiry, you said that similar questions to those that you put to the environment organisations about their funding could be put to other witnesses. I appreciate that we are tight for time and that there is no time left to explore the issue. However, we have in front of us representatives of an organisation that has said in the national press that it intends to use a large foreign donation to influence the outcome of local elections. I wanted the opportunity to explore the ethics of that. If we do not have the opportunity to do that now, can I ask that we write to Communities Against Turbines, to explore the issue and to give the organisation the opportunity to answer serious questions on the matter?

The Convener: That is a fair point. I am happy to do so.

I thank our witnesses from Communities Against Turbines and the Trump Organization for coming along. Mr Trump, given your love for Scotland and your interest in pursuing investments in Scotland, I was tempted to ask you whether you have thought about putting in an offer to buy Rangers Football Club, but I am afraid that we did not have an opportunity to progress that point.

Donald Trump: Can I tell you that I may be thinking about it? [*Laughter.*]

The Convener: That will make tomorrow's front pages, I dare say.

Meeting closed at 11:52.

I thank the witnesses, members of the committee and other MSPs who attended. I apologise to everyone who had more questions to ask. We did not have time to get round to them.

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