

John Griffiths AC /AM
Gweinidog yr Amgylchedd a Datblygu Cynaliadwy
Minister for Environment and Sustainable Development



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-324
Ein cyf/Our ref JG/05689/11

William Powell AM
Chair Petition's committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
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14 July 2011

Dear William,

Thank you for your letter of 29th June regarding the Petition P-04-324 "No to TAN 8". I am happy to restate the Welsh Government's strongly held view that whilst the scale of the National Grid proposals for grid reinforcement in Mid Wales is unacceptable, we remain fully committed to the principles of strategic planning for large scale wind farms as set out in TAN 8.

It is a commercial fact that onshore wind is currently the most mature form of renewable energy technology and it is also a fact that Wales has one of the most abundant wind resources in Europe. As a consequence it is inevitable that commercial developers will seek to build wind farms in Wales, particularly as the UK Government continues to offer advantageous financial support for clean energy, and we must ensure that our policy protects our most valued and cherished landscapes.

TAN 8 seeks to restrict the proliferation of large scale wind farms across Wales by limiting such developments to seven Strategic Search Areas (SSAs) which account for less than 4% of the area of Wales. The SSAs were derived as a result of independent technical and empirical research and were assessed against issues such as grid and transportation constraints. Our policy was also informed by a range of relevant stakeholders.

We believe that this approach offers the best way forward in terms of meeting our commitments to reduce carbon emissions and our international obligations, whilst optimising the output of clean energy. I should also remind you that applications for development within the SSAs require consent either from the UK Government or from the local planning authority and will require Environmental Impact Assessment. There is no presumption that all wind farms proposals located in the SSAs will be approved and they should be determined on their merits

On 17th June my colleague the First Minister issued a Statement which reinforced our view that the SSAs had a finite capacity and that there were maximum levels of development. I subsequently issued a letter on 6th July outlining in more detail the maxima for the SSAs

and called upon all bodies responsible for determining applications for wind farm development in the SSAs to respect our policy.

There are many technical issues associated with the efficacy of wind power and associated concerns, which we have considered as part of our policy development, and I would be happy to provide you with detailed responses to these technical aspects separately.

We believe that the planning policy framework which we have established is fit for purpose.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'John Griffiths', written in dark ink.

John Griffiths AC / AM

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