

Environment and Sustainability Committee

Inquiry into Energy Policy and Planning in Wales

EPP 23 – David Lewis

By E-mail : E&S.comm@wales.gov.uk

14 September 2011

The National Assembly for Wales

Environment and Sustainability Committee

Cardiff Bay

Cardiff

CF99 1NA

ENERGY POLICY IN WALES

In response to your invitation for public comment on these matters, I offer my personal views as below.

I have no political or commercial interests, except as a taxpayer.

1. I believe that the policies adopted in the Renewable Energy Route Map 2008 are fundamentally flawed, and most of my opinions expressed in my response to that document still stand. I accept the need for energy conservation, insulation and recycling which are evidently sensible, tangible and measureable.

2. The First Minister is quoted as stating

“We’ve got to shift to a resource-efficient, green economy as fast as possible. That move is vital, both to play our part in the global fight against climate change and also to promote greener, sustainable jobs. The trick we need to pull off is to exploit actions needed to combat climate change in order to ensure a prosperous future.”

The terms “Climate Change” and “Green” are usually quoted to justify all these policies but in practical terms they have not been defined or quantified precisely. The additional costs and subsidies were omitted from the Route Map, and the public have a right to know these figures.

The WAG obsession with costly low or zero carbon policies is based on the unproven assumption that this will affect our climate.

In truth CO₂ forms only 385 parts per million of our atmosphere and only 12 parts per million are man-made. Of those 12 parts the whole of Wales contributes a fraction equating to one thousandth. This illustrates the total futility of WAG’s claim that they can combat climate change. The First Minister regards this as a trick but most of the public might see it as trickery.

3. The main plank of WAG energy policy is to swamp Wales with onshore and offshore wind turbines with the false claim that they will “tackle climate change”. If WAG were in business marketing a product with that promise, they would never get it past the Trading Standards criteria. If the WAG seek powers to approve energy consents up to 100MW, it suggests that they wish to go faster in this direction than those consents approved by the UK Government. This rapid expansion of wind energy will increase Renewable Obligation subsidies by billions of pounds. This will surely mean that fuel poverty is bound to increase.
4. The basic fact of wind energy is that it can supplement but not replace the electricity supplies from base load fossil fuel or nuclear generation. Any attempt to regard wind as a substitute will certainly mean power cuts with disastrous consequences. That represents a real and far bigger threat than speculating on the possible effects of climate change.
5. The WAG believe that the creation of subsidised “Green” jobs will sustain our economy. This policy did not work in the light of the experience of Spain who chose this path but lost 2.2 proper jobs for each new so-called Green job created in the field of solar and wind power. It is vital that the WAG “Green Job Strategy July 2009” is applied with caution and prudence to avoid those pitfalls in these tough economic circumstances.
6. It seems on reflection that the WAG choose to ruin our landscape and shorelines with unsightly, noisy and unreliable wind turbines with no benefits and at huge additional costs to industry, commerce, and of course the people of Wales.
7. I trust that the Committee will consider these wider implications in the context of their deliberations.

Sincerely

David Lewis

14 September 2011