Environment and Sustainability Committee
Inquiry into Energy Policy and Planning in Wales
EPP 135 – Nigel Brown

I understand you have invited comment on this subject.

I am 99% opposed (the other 1% is the belief that we need to pursue some forms of renewable energy) to the current plans for massive numbers of turbines and many miles of overhead power lines and pylons in mid-Wales and the border area.

1/ We (you) cannot justify destroying pristine countryside and a vital tourist industry for a technology that is so fundamentally flawed.

2/ There is a mass of factual evidence that inland windfarms do not deliver a high enough percentage of "installed capacity" to justify the crippling feed-in tariffs/subsidies that will put many thousands more people into fuel poverty in coming years yet Government has a statutory duty to remove families from fuel poverty.
16% to 20% output makes for very expensive electricity.

3/ Indian investors have ditched future windfarms because they cannot get remotely near the required 50% load factor
Green World Investor website :-
"Investors are looking for power plants with a Plant Load Factor of more than 50% which automatically rules out wind and solar energy."

4/ Self-interest groups have swayed some politicians but the facts are clear. Denmark was at the forefront of chasing wind energy - but now has the most expensive energy costs in Europe and a landscape blighted by hundreds of turbines.
Emeritus Professor Michael Laughton, FREng will tell you that ALL the installed capacity of any future UK windfarms would need 100% back-up for when the wind disappears in High pressure periods in Winter.

5/ If inefficient windfarms are pursued then investors will *not* put up the money for stand-by stations to be built (ref. independant Poyry Report) and used only intermittently.
Gas suppliers Centrica are already saying *they* want subsidies because the 'stand-by gas' will only be demanded on an irregular basis.

National Audit Office 10th June 2010 report highlights the problem too :-

Significant flexible reserve generating capacity may be required because of the expected increase in intermittent wind generation. Marginal prices may be subject to extreme variations and spikes. It is unclear whether the current market system offers sufficient incentives to maintain security of supply in this situation. There may be particular problems for nuclear power, given its relative inflexibility and fixed generation costs. Existing electricity storage options (for example, pumped storage) are limited, and the extent to which technological developments (for example, breakthroughs in battery technology) will address this is uncertain.

6/ Spain is in real trouble :-

"Right now there is a debt related to these renewable energies that nobody knows how it is going to be paid -- of 16 Billion Euros."

"In early 2009 the Socialist government of Spain reduced alternative energy subsidies by 30%. Dr Gabriel Calzada continues:
"At that point the whole pyramid collapsed. They are firing thousands of people. BP closed down the two largest solar production plants in Europe. They are firing between 25,000 and 40,000 people...."
"What do we do with all this industry that we have been creating with subsidies that now is collapsing? The bubble is too big. We cannot continue pumping enough money. ...The President of the Renewable Industry in Spain (wrote a column arguing that) ...the only way is finding other countries that will give taxpayers' money away to our industry to take it and continue maintaining these jobs."

Windfarms and unsustainable subsidies negotiated by self-interest groups have made this the 21st Century South Sea Bubble.

7/ Abandoned and derelict turbines litter California, Hawaii and parts of Spain. Companies go bust and disappear, leaving local authorities to pick up decommissioning bills.

8/ NOT ONE OF THE CURRENT DEVELOPERS HAVE MADE CONTACT WITH THE DYFED-POWYS FIRE SERVICE TO CHECK OUT THEIR ABILITY TO PUT OUT TURBINE FIRES IN UNITS SEVERAL HUNDRED FEET HIGH. I have checked and they have no equipment to reach these heights but "claim" they can put out ensuing ground fires, which could be useful - if true - in the crazy Dyfnant Forest site.

In addition to not working when there is no wind or too much wind, they also have to be shut down in icy weather to avoid "Ice fling" (according to Scottish Power) i.e. large lumps of ice being cast off and landing on public access paths and tracks.

9/ The view from an expert :-
“What needs to be changed is the political climate. Our energy choices should be dictated by what science says, not politicians or lobbyists.”
“We should be taking aggressive measures to solve our energy and pollution issues, but should not be wasting time and money on illusionary solutions— which are primarily promoted by those with vested financial interests in them.”
John Droz, retired American physicist.

10/ Noise. I was truly astounded to be told by Scottish Power Renewables that no accurate test results were available for the giant turbines aimed at Dyfnant Forest. "When the first one is built of this size, the factory will take a reading and then feed

it into a computer model to forecast what will happen in Dyfnant." Wonderful stuff - experiment at our expense.

Bear in mind that on the Scottish Borders one windfarm has been shut down by the local authority for breaching noise limits.

In summary, intermittent and ineffective technology, driven only by excessive subsidies and tweaked sales 'pitches' from persons after our money. Current and long-term environmental damage by both visual intrusion on an unprecedented scale on higher ground plus the huge concrete bases and roads that the developers have no intention of clearing away. Turbine blades become a problem as there is no means of recycling. If cut up they produce carcinogenic dust and Scottish Renewables thinks they "might have to be buried in a Designated Waste site" --- very green ... and this practice is outlawed by many European States.

TAN8 and indeed all the associated wind policies are promoting a "blind alley" technology.

Regards
Nigel Brown