

Environment and Sustainability Committee

Inquiry into Energy Policy and Planning in Wales

EPP 217 – John R Jones

September 2011.

Environment and Sustainability Committee,
Cardiff Bay,
Cardiff,
CF99 1NA.

Dear Sirs/Madam,

WAG Enquiry into Energy Policy and Planning in Wales **Tan 8 and the Mid Wales Connection.**

I am writing with regard to your inquiry into energy policy and planning in Wales, and particularly the 2 petitions regarding Tan 8 and the Mid Wales Connection project. I am very pleased that our Government has set up this committee and I think it has a very important job to do that will affect our lives in Mid Wales greatly – for better for worse depending on the outcome..

I believe Tan 8 has a number of serious flaws unforeseen at the time it was drafted which will devastate Montgomeryshire. It consigns parts of Wales to be changed forever and turned into industrial landscape without any thought how this affects the people or the environment. I understand Tan 8 was drafted in haste following pressure from the London Government.

I recognise and support the need to move to renewal energy but I think that wind farms are not the answer. I cannot understand a Government spending vast sums of money on wind power which only produces 20% of its potential, at a time when the whole country is being asked to reduce its spending because of the present economic difficulties. Why is there so little money made available for research into other forms of generating electricity such as water power, wave and tidal power. I understand that large numbers of trees are to be felled to make way for these windmills. Trees, Ladies and Gentlemen, take Carbon Dioxide in through their leaves and give out Oxygen. I thought that the purpose of 'green' energy was to reduce the Carbon emissions of this country, obviously the people who drafted Tan 8 did not understand simple biology. Felling large tracts of mature trees will negate any assumed reduction in Carbon Dioxide emissions by using 'green' power generation.

It appears that very little research has been done into the affects of the windmill farms on Mid Wales. For example, when I asked an engineer from National Grid on the affect of flooding on the holding power of soil when large pylons are built in the area, he replied that National Grid had no knowledge of any flooding here!!!

I therefore ask that the committee in their review should look at, and call for reports where necessary on the following;

The visual impact of the windmills and pylons on the area and how this will affect tourism activities in mid Wales. A proper survey should be carried out. I understand that the pylons are to be over 600ft tall and will be seen from parts of the Snowdonia National Park. They will be as tall as the Aran and Cader Idris from their foot. I believe that this is not acceptable to the National Park Authorities.

A number of the windmills will be in Forestry owned land. Large tracts of trees are to be cut down to accommodate them which will leave large quantities of brash. This will be a fire hazard which could have serious consequences.

Large amounts of concrete will be used to provide bases for the windmills. In the mountains this will reduce the ability of the soil to absorb rainwater. Money has been spent recently to take up any drainage pipes so that the soil can absorb water in order to reduce flooding in the lower valleys. The concrete basis will negate all this work and cause flooding all the way down the river to Shrewsbury and other towns. Has any research or study been made regarding this possible extra flooding? As previously mentioned, what affect does flooding have on the soil?

It is of concern to the people of Montgomeryshire that heavy vehicles will be travelling on the roads of the county to deliver the windmills and the hub to their sites. The present roads are totally unsuitable for this type of traffic and the ensuing disruption to local drivers will be serious.. Who will bear the cost of new roads where necessary? Some bridges will need to be strengthened or replaced to take the heavier weights, who will pay for this work? Who will bear the cost of extra traffic police required to escort these large loads? It is unfair that the local councils are burdened with these costs.

Clearing large areas of trees and scrub for the windmills and in the creation of new roads where necessary will impact on the wild life and vegetation of the area. What research has been made into all this? For example, the Curlew and Red Kite are protected birds. Will the environment of these birds be protected?

Has any proper research been made into the affect on people's health from electric cables on pylons? We are told that cancer in children increases where people live near pylons.

I would like to see a cost benefit analysis of taxpayer expenditure on turbines versus the benefits of these turbines. Taxpayers will be paying twice for their electricity, directly to the company and through the tax system. Also I would like to see National Grid give a proper and true statement of the costs involved in pylons and underground cables.

I look forward to receiving your reply in due course with answers to the various points which have been raised about the scheme.

Yours faithfully,

Jphn. R. Jones.