

Environment and Sustainability Committee

Cardiff Bay

*Environment and Sustainability Committee
Inquiry into Energy Policy and Planning in Wales
EPP 283 – Mrs J Evans & Rev P. Evans*

CF99 1NA

Re: Mid Wales Connection

Probably nothing I write will be new to you, but I want to add my voice to those who have already written.

My preference would be that none of this destructive expensive madness should be allowed; I cannot see any way in which this 'development' makes any sort of sense and building further large onshore wind farms should be stopped before it's too late! However....

I think that either substation site is inappropriate and would find it impossible to make a choice between the two proposed; to make a choice is like deciding between cyanide or arsenic (but you have to choose one) for tea! My husband was vicar of Llanllugan (Cefn Coch) for 17 years and the place is very dear to us, but Abermule is special too. I live on the routes from Cefn Coch.

I object to pylons on any of the routes (and much of what I say below applies to the substations too) because:

The pylons would have a significant impact in areas of outstandingly beautiful landscape

For people who would be living in close proximity to the pylons there is the problem of noise pollution as a result of the lines buzzing/humming/vibrating and the possibility of health and well-being related issues..

There is the probability of Electromagnetic interference with electrical equipment; I know how my car radio reacts to pylon proximity.

There would be huge traffic disruption because of movement of large equipment;

There would be a significant impact on wildlife habitat;

There is a lack of formal Environmental Impact Assessment.

Sustainable development is the only acceptable means of developing our precious landscape: "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Brundtland Commission). This development proposal is totally unsustainable and unacceptable for a rural landscape.

Your proposal for pylons in any of the areas outlined in your literature clearly compromises our ability to sustain our way of life. Our local rural way of life would be decimated, our health and well-being would be adversely affected, and our tourists would disappear. I have already heard from people finding it well-nigh impossible to sell their houses.

Erecting huge pylons with overhead cables is NOT an acceptable option and must be rejected. The pylons would seriously affect the amenity of everyone living in or visiting the valley.

In my opinion the consultation process as it is is inadequate and flawed:

It has not allowed enough time for people to consider the proposal more fully.

It has not provided information on potential alternatives: riverbed, underground or railway line route options. If the wind farms are allowed to go ahead, the best and preferred option would be to route the cables along the riverbed of the River Severn or underground. I believe the extra costs of installing the cables out of sight would be worth it in the long term.

Erecting huge pylons with overhead cables is NOT an acceptable option and must be rejected. The pylons would seriously affect the amenity of everyone living in or visiting the valley.

As you may know, Montgomeryshire is an outstandingly beautiful county, rightly part of an area known as Powys Paradwys Cymru (Powys the Paradise of Wales) which until recently has remained largely unspoilt. Plans are now in place to put 800 large wind turbines, each up to 415ft high and visible over hundreds of square miles, on the ruggedly beautiful uplands. Each of these turbines would need transporting through our country roads and lanes, and a restructuring of those country roads and lanes – a nightmare in itself! Each would need a huge concrete base which would replace a huge piece of earth presently teeming with the natural life of local animals birds and plants; and the concrete would need to be transported too; another nightmare. Added to that are the plans to “upgrade” the National Grid connections into Shropshire; this would mean building a vast substation and the erection of a long line of 50m pylons through our beautiful valleys and on into Shropshire. Each of the pylons would also need to be on a huge concrete base, and the further transportation issues are another nightmare. The laying-waste of such natural beauty and resource can be deemed nothing other than rape of the country. The devastation to the lives and livelihoods of local people could likewise be called rape. All of this would have a huge impact on the well-being of the local population, causing a negative impact on the local economy with loss of tourism income and local jobs. The vast quantities of concrete involved would also probably lead to greater flooding.

Onshore wind power development is well known to be costly and inefficient and will not mean that further power stations will not be needed; wind-power can only give back-up power. Also, in focussing all sights on onshore wind, we're not even looking at any alternatives. The proposed development doesn't even make economic sense and will be enormously costly, not just in the ways outlined so far, but in financial terms, costing, I understand, in the region of £2 billion overall and then about £120 million a year in subsidy; it would seem that the only “winners” are the developers.

This situation has partly come about because of WAG's TAN 8, in which 3 of the 7 areas in Wales designated for alternative energy production have been allocated to Montgomeryshire. I understand that TAN8 was due to be reviewed in 2010 and that this has not happened.

I recognise the need to produce electricity from renewable sources. We have installed Solar PV on our roof and it is working very well; it's very satisfying to be using “our own” electricity to boil the kettle or wash the clothes! Maybe if plans could be put forward to install SolarPV on as many houses as possible in the country, and even locally used micro development of wind energy, there would be an alternative to this whole scale devastation of our natural resources.

Yours sincerely,

Jane Evans (Mrs) and Peter Evans (Rev)

