



Determining and Delivering on Scotland's Energy Future

Friends of the Earth Scotland welcome the opportunity to brief ahead of the Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee debate. We support the Committee report's overall vision of improved efficiency, environmental sustainability, social justice, and maximising economic and employment opportunities; and we welcome many of its recommendations.

A matter of months after the Scottish Parliament passed the Climate Change (Scotland) Act with a target of 42% emissions reductions by 2020; and with guidance for new power plant applications to be signed off by the end of the year, it is more necessary than ever to rapidly decarbonise our energy system. With this in mind we would like to draw members' attention to three particular areas that would help deliver the Committee's energy vision.

1. Power of Scotland Renewed

Friends of the Earth Scotland, the World Development Movement, WWF Scotland and RSPB Scotland, recently commissioned a report, entitled 'Power of Scotland Renewed'ⁱ, which shows that a truly sustainable energy future is achievable for Scotland, meeting climate change, renewable energy and energy saving targets and creating new economic opportunities while protecting sensitive environments and maintaining security of supply.

Based on research by independent energy analysts Garrad Hassan, the report shows the enormous potential to increase generation of electricity from renewable sources during the next two decades, so much so that **by 2030 renewable energy can meet up to 143% of Scotland's projected annual electricity demand.**

If Scotland also meets practical targets for energy saving, the research concludes it is feasible for all fossil fuel fired generation to be closed by 2030, delivering almost complete decarbonisation for Scotland's electricity supply. Even in the "business as usual" case **Scotland does not require any new fossil or nuclear capacity to maintain security of supply.** Instead security of supply can be maintained by practical investments in grid upgrades, interconnectors, deferrable demand and electricity storage.

In light of these findings Friends of the Earth Scotland believes new applications for unabated coal power stations – such as that for Hunterston, which is also included within the National Planning Framework – should be rejected.

The Minister could be asked, given the report's findings, why the Hunterston power station was included with the National Planning Framework.

2. Area Wide Home Insulation Scheme

Friends of the Earth Scotland warmly welcomes the Committee's recommendation in paragraph 108 that there should be investment in an area-based, targeted energy efficiency/conservation programme "in the order of £100-170 million per year over the next decade to come". We would draw members' attention to the motion passed by the Parliament in November 2008 which stated that "an additional £100 million per annum would be a welcome change to the draft budget for 2009-10".ⁱⁱ Lord Stern has advocated even higher figures as part of a package of spending on a 'green stimulus'ⁱⁱⁱ.

Unfortunately the current level of investment by the Scottish Government will not provide the step change needed in this area. Investment of the scale suggested by the Committee would cut carbon emissions, create green jobs, and tackle fuel poverty; the Scottish Government is only spending £15 million on such a scheme (with an additional £15 million apparently secured from match funding^{iv}).

The Minister could be asked, given the importance of tackling climate change, creating jobs, and beating fuel poverty, why there is such a shortfall on the figure suggested by the Committee.

3. Emissions Performance Standard

Paragraph 141 of the Committee report calls “for the Scottish Government to conclude its consultation on section 36 consents as soon as possible and to use this opportunity to drive the development of carbon capture and storage technology”. Yet the Scottish Government seem reluctant to do so preferring to delay under the auspices of “ensuring the regulatory framework in broad terms is similar across the UK as a whole”^v.

Yet Scotland is better positioned to help develop carbon capture and storage and has more ambitious climate change targets (42% emissions reductions by 2020, compared to 34% across the UK). The Scottish Government should be leading on this issue, pushing the development of carbon capture and storage on existing facilities and preventing new unabated coal power plants. Instead it is lagging behind.

The Minister could be asked why, given Scotland’s more ambitious climate change targets, it is waiting on UK guidance and not pushing ahead with its own guidance to encourage the development of carbon capture and storage.

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Scotland is well placed to be at the forefront of the decarbonisation of energy but investors and business must have confidence in the willingness of Government to pursue an ambitious policy direction. Such innovation would secure green investment, help address the climate crisis and the economic crisis, allow Scotland to lead the way in research and development of new technology - much of which could be used by the developing world - and ensure we embrace a truly sustainable energy future.

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i The full report and a summary for policy-makers is available at: <http://www.foe-scotland.org.uk/energy>

ii Scottish Parliament Official Report: <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/business/officialReports/meetingsParliament/or-08/sor1113-02.htm#Col12309>

iii <http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/granthamInstitute/publications/An%20outline%20of%20the%20case%20for%20a%20%27green%27%20stimulus.pdf>

iv However, Alex Neil’s recent answer to Patrick Harvie’s parliamentary question (27361) suggests this may only be in the region of £750,000:

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/business/pqa/wa-09/wa0924.htm#9>

v Scottish Government response, page 20, point 141: <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/committees/eet/papers-09/eep09-22.pdf>