
New Windfarm and Biofuel Plant

Posted by Geeooo - 2008/07/21 14:21

Two announcements in the past three days, a new wind farm in Abington and a Biomass plant in Fife.

Do we think Scotland is finally turning the corner regarding getting our country off of fossil fuels, or are these just gimmicks made as a token gesture? Are the SNP just hitting their targets, or do we think that Salmond and Co will push on further with this?

Personally, for the record, so all know where I stand, I would rather have Nuclear than Fossil Fuel, but would rather have anything green (Wind, Hydro, Wave and Biomass - which is Carbon Neutral) than Nuclear.

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Re:New Windfarm and Biofuel Plant

Posted by TLJ - 2008/07/21 14:52

Hi Geeooo

Welcome to Scotsgait - and thanks for the first of what I hope will be many posts.

I'm not as hot (pardon the pun) on the energy debate as I should be. Nuclear scares me though - I don't have any doubts that another Chernobyl will happen at some point in the future - and I'm prepared to accept that windfarms will become common blots on our landscape as time goes on (although, to be honest, I find the turn of the blades to be very relaxing).

Unfortunately, that is where my hypocrisy comes in. I have Lewis connections - and I don't want to see pretty much the whole island become one massive windfarm as was basically being proposed.

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Re:New Windfarm and Biofuel Plant

Posted by Clare - 2008/07/21 15:40

I can understand what you're saying T. I think "Nuclear" and I immediately think "Dounraey". I too wish I had more real knowledge on this whole subject and I am often happy to sit and watch threads develop when this is discussed especially when it gets technical. I remain horrified however by the monster we have sitting right at the top of our country on the Atlantic and extremely nervous of the danger that lurks there and perhaps always will. I know that area well. Fabulous coastline up the West coast and around Cape Wrath and along through Durness all the way to Thurso and Scrabster. Unfortunately for us Dounraey is in there too. The lies told about that place, the appalling breaches of health and safety laws speak for themselves when it comes to trusting these people. We can't trust them and I think they have lost all right to expect us to.

Green energy is the safest way and Scotland is rich in powerful resources like water and wind. I went exploring in the north around the hydro power schemes and was fascinated by them. The work that went into those! Incredible stuff. Great care had been taken to preserve the landscape too. The workings of it all mesmerised me. I spent a small fortune on books about it. I remember coming home to tell my Dad all about it and he said to me casual as you like, "Aye I know, I built the dam at Loch Errochty!" Oh I was so impressed! He didn't build the dam obviously, he was involved in concrete shuttering and the men working were all billeted there. But I remember a later visit to Pitlochry after my dad died and my wee journey from there to find Erochty Dam and saying to the guy at the Pitlochry Power Station, "How to I get to Erochty Dam, I need to go and see it, my dad built it."

Wave power, wind power, water power. Scotland could achieve so much from these natural resources not just for ourselves but we can make a lot of money from it too by selling it on to others. Nuclear.....no. De-commissioning Dounraey is costing how much again? So let's move away from the whole nuclear option and stay clean - and safe.

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Re:New Windfarm and Biofuel Plant

Posted by Levenax - 2008/07/21 16:03

I don't like windfarms because they are a blot on the landscape although offshore ones would be OK. Biomass is good because it produces compost as a by-product and that helps to enrich the soil in a natural way. However I don't think

biomass will ever produce very much of our energy. I like wave and especially tidal power because both are limitless and the design and production of the hardware could be a very good industry for Scotland. We aren't spending enough on R&D though. I disagree with the SNP about nuclear and I think it should be part of our energy strategy. Modern nuclear plants are much safer and more efficient than any of the ones operating in the UK at the moment. It's a bit like comparing a new Honda Civic with a Ford Anglia and worldwide the number of people killed by nuclear energy and its support industries is only a fraction of that of coal and oil. Piper Alpha killed one hundred and sixty seven in one disaster but nobody even suggested that we should close down all North Sea rigs. I also think that we need to make more use of our own coal resources by burning them in carbon capture power stations. I don't buy the Green's argument that we shouldn't burn any fossil fuel because any pollution that we cause is a tiny fraction of that of China or India.

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Re:New Windfarm and Biofuel Plant

Posted by Meg - 2008/07/21 18:50

I am also against nuclear power and I am happy to see the increase in green energy. However, I think there maybe some mistakes made along the way until we find what suits us best. I live in an area which will be affected by the expansion of the Whitelee Wind Farm but I would rather have this than nuclear power, even if in the long term wind power is not seen as the best option.

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Re:New Windfarm and Biofuel Plant

Posted by DavieDites - 2008/07/22 17:25

Nuclear is the predictable politician's answer to the energy problem. The short term costs are not too great and you stick the reactors in areas where they are invisible to the general population and so fewer people will object.

The real costs are so huge that the whole business is uneconomic. The bulk of these are postponed for future generations to pick up the tab but we are now seeing the costs of de-commissioning our old reactors beginning to escalate.

To compound the politicians' folly, like oil, uranium is a finite resource and supply is already running short of demand. Peak uranium anyone? It is a short term fix.

I have seen this coming for many moons. The failure of government to press forward with anything other than token renewable projects made it obvious that they would one day pull the nuclear option out of the bag and declare it the only game in town.

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Re:New Windfarm and Biofuel Plant

Posted by woodysdad - 2008/07/22 20:48

This Island of ours is made of COAL!! What's wrong with going down that road for pete's sake!:unsure:

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Re:New Windfarm and Biofuel Plant

Posted by Clare - 2008/07/22 21:13

Davie
Could you give some more info on the uranium connection please? I know only that it is deadly and never ceases to become deadly is that right? Or does it? What is "peak" uranium? Can anyone provide an idiot's guide to nuclear? It isn't that I'm an idiot in the true sense you understand but only where nuclear is concerned. I have read about the Dounraey situation and the massive costs involved in the decommissioning process. Unfortunately I've also read that the H&S set up there was pretty appalling over the years.

Woody

I'm thinking the answer to your question is probably that coal isn't going to help our carbon footprint or global warming.

Re:New Windfarm and Biofuel Plant

Posted by Levenax - 2008/07/22 22:36

I'm not convinced that global warming is the fault of human activity. Cooling and warming of the planet is a cyclical business e.g. we had an ice age about 10000 years ago and then the planet warmed up and the glaciers receded. So what caused that? Certainly not humans burning fossil fuels. So whilst I'm all for conservation of energy it's not because I think the CO2 we produce is causing much harm although the other pollutants of uncontrolled heavy industry are undoubtedly toxic. Anyway, oil is far too valuable a commodity to burn just for heat and it's shameful that we've wasted billions of tons of the stuff heating our very badly insulated houses and powering cars with unnecessarily large and inefficient engines.

The number of humans on earth will have to decrease quite soon if the race is to survive, even in the medium term, and that's why I think it's futile trying to save folk from famine and natural disasters when we clearly don't have the resources to deal with the scale of recent disasters or the increasing number of victims. IMO it's fanciful to imagine that GM crops will provide enough food to feed the ever increasing population so the only alternative is mass starvation until the population reaches a naturally sustainable level.

Re:New Windfarm and Biofuel Plant

Posted by Clare - 2008/07/22 22:58

Lev that's barbaric. We could all survive if the rich nations were not so greedy. Look at the food we waste for a start. You can't possibly be saying that we should not respond to natural disasters like famines and earthquakes and floods surely but just be glad we live where it is relatively safe? We just happen to have been born here, we just happen to live in a relatively well off country. Poor people can't be left to die in the way they are. It just isn't right. There is room for all: we just have to be less greedy, less selfish.

As for global warming I think it has been established that we are wrecking the planet. The signs are all there surely? I agree with the insulation issue you raise. I live in a very old cottage and even after installing central heating and double glazing the place is still a fridge if there is no heating on. I plan to address that issue before this winter sets in as the heating bills are intolerable. But do re-think your policy of allowing people to die of starvation. It is callous and quite dreadful.

Re:New Windfarm and Biofuel Plant

Posted by Levenax - 2008/07/23 08:09

I don't mean that we should willfully neglect our duty to lend succour where possible but there will come a time when we can't do it. The rate of population growth is unsustainable so something has to curb it. There is always a possibility of an epidemic of some disease that will cull millions e.g. influenza. The 1918 epidemic killed 50 million people see <http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/influenza-epidemic/> and some future one may well be even worse. Bear in mind that we have very few effective treatments for viral diseases.

I don't want to be prophet of doom but common sense indicates that as oil runs out in the next few decades that the earth can't support the population we currently have. We either stop breeding as quickly as we do or something else will intervene.

Re:New Windfarm and Biofuel Plant

Posted by Geeooo - 2008/07/23 10:02

It is true that the earth goes through natural cycles of warming and cooling, but 10000 years ago there were no planes, no fossil fuel burning stations, no cars point being we have not helped matters and probably have acted to speed things up. It is our duty to correct our mistakes, and I congratulate the Scottish government for putting words into actions with these measures.

The question I was asking was do we think that the government will continue to back it's words up, or is it more political

point scoring?

Re:New Windfarm and Biofuel Plant

Posted by LYDIA REID - 2008/07/23 15:12

Geeoo I wanted to say welcome and an interesting post.

I wish I knew more about this subject of Nuclear against wind farms etc.

I can understand the issue of people who live in one of the most beautiful lands in the world not wanting the landscape ruined. Unfortunately, we need this. It seems the only damage wind and water power will cause to people is that they will object to the spoiling of the beauty of our land. Why can they not be painted green anyway? That would surely look better than gray.

Your point Lev seems to be put them out at sea but how much more will this cost. I see your point about the islands being covered that is not fair but can we not distribute them a little more evenly. Why not on hills surely that would pick up more wind.

I would trust in Alex Salmond, so far he has worked hard and tried within the limits of a minority government and less than expected funding from London. He certainly seems committed. He sees the financial benefits in building, using and selling this power.

Re:New Windfarm and Biofuel Plant

Posted by LYDIA REID - 2008/07/23 15:37

woodysdad wrote:

This Island of ours is made of COAL!! What's wrong with going down that road for pete's sake!:unsure:

Hi

would that not mean coal miners bringing it to the surface or am I out of date.

Re:New Windfarm and Biofuel Plant

Posted by DavieDites - 2008/07/23 17:23

Clare

On a quick trawl through Google, I found this

http://www.fraw.org.uk/mobbsey/papers/oies_article.html

of course, there are always people who say this is nonsense

<http://www.americanenergyindependence.com/uranium.html>

The "peak uranium" was a reference to "peak oil", where the amount of oil being produced reaches a maximum and then begins to decline as newly discovered stocks fail to make up for the depleted reservoirs. We are on the downward slope now but demand continues to rise, hence the rise in the oil price. Sorry, we can't blame Gordon or Alistair and the fuel tax.

Re:New Windfarm and Biofuel Plant

Posted by Clare - 2008/07/23 17:47

Thanks Davie! I've been internet-ing on the whole subject and educating myself, honest! Thanks for the links and will go and have a look. \o

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Re:New Windfarm and Biofuel Plant

Posted by LYDIA REID - 2008/07/24 08:42

BBC teletext this morning shows Greenpeace has accused BERR of undermining the UK effort to give access to the national grid for wind and water (clean energy).

It seems the EU passed a directive that clean energy should get priority connection to the national grid and BERR Britain's business department has not complied with this directive.

I remember Alex Salmond using this as a defence when criticized for not keeping his promise to increase the use and production of clean energy.

The criticism came from Labour. I now wonder if it is Scotland denied access to the grid for clean energy.

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Re:New Windfarm and Biofuel Plant

Posted by TLJ - 2008/07/24 08:54

LYDIA REID wrote:

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The story is here. Rather than not complying, it's lobbying to change some of the terminology.

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Re:New Windfarm and Biofuel Plant

Posted by LYDIA REID - 2008/07/24 08:56

Levenax wrote:

I don't like windfarms because they are a blot on the landscape although offshore ones would be OK. Biomass is good because it produces compost as a by-product and that helps to enrich the soil in a natural way. However I don't think biomass will ever produce very much of our energy. I like wave and especially tidal power because both are limitless and the design and production of the hardware could be a very good industry for Scotland. We aren't spending enough on R&D though. I disagree with the SNP about nuclear and I think it should be part of our energy strategy. Modern nuclear plants are much safer and more efficient than any of the ones operating in the UK at the moment. It's a bit like comparing a new Honda Civic with a Ford Anglia and worldwide the number of people killed by nuclear energy and its support industries is only a fraction of that of coal and oil. Piper Alpha killed one hundred and sixty seven in one disaster but nobody even suggested that we should close down all North Sea rigs. I also think that we need to make more use of our own coal resources by burning them in carbon capture power stations. I don't buy the Green's argument that we shouldn't burn any fossil fuel because any pollution that we cause is a tiny fraction of that of China or India.

I am a bit wary of debating this with you as I know so little, but am I right in saying that one of the problems with nuclear energy is the waste products. I remember a debate in the Lords, which only caught my attention because this very snooty old lady stood up and stated that the Commons should change the law to give the right to Westminster to bury nuclear waste in Scotland's hills and mountains. She "abhorred" the fact that Scotland had planning rights which stopped the building of nuclear power stations and that Westminster could not bury this waste as other countries would pay the UK a great deal to do so.

She stated Westminster should rescind this right over planning within the Scotland Act as a matter of urgency.

I found this today seemingly four different dangerous incidents in France in quite a short time.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/7522712.stm>

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Re:New Windfarm and Biofuel Plant

Posted by LYDIA REID - 2008/07/24 09:07

TLJ wrote:

LYDIA REID wrote:

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Thanks TLJ I understand it a little more now I am away to see if I can find figures on how the rest of the UK compares to Scotland on the production of clean energy. I do remember the debate in Scottish Parliament, and how determined Alex Salmond seemed that no matter how much you produce if it cannot be connected to the national grid it is useless.

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