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## Energy suppliers are preying on the poorest

Posted by Brenna1508 - 2008/09/06 13:54

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Once again the most vulnerable in society pay for the richest. This is an obscene practice that has been known about for many years and which should be made illegal.

Energywatch said that a consumer checking the cheapest online energy deals would be shocked to discover that over a year British Gas charged PPM customers Â£567 more than online customers, E.on Â£411 more, Npower Â£378 more, ScottishPower Â£172 more and SSE Â£167 more. EDF, meantime, had no equivalent tariff.

[http://www.theherald.co.uk/politics/news/display.var.2442065.0.Calls\\_to\\_stop\\_energy\\_companies\\_preying\\_on\\_poorest\\_c  
ustomers.php](http://www.theherald.co.uk/politics/news/display.var.2442065.0.Calls_to_stop_energy_companies_preying_on_poorest_customers.php)

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## Re:Energy suppliers are preying on the poorest

Posted by LYDIA REID - 2008/09/06 15:48

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When you consider that each payment of gas and electricity is paid in advance in cash so these companies make interest on this overpayment.

This is also true for people who pay by direct debit but the cost is as the article proves lower.

The new meters which some companies have installed increase the cost without informing the customer other than a short letter saying the price of the commodity is now .....

If like many others the person has no knowledge of how to work this out then they have no way to check whether the meter is set correctly or not.

No paper bill no ability to take this to citizens advice for example.

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## Re:Energy suppliers are preying on the poorest

Posted by DoricMan - 2008/09/06 16:16

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A Windfall Tax has to include not only the Energy producer's billions, but also the rogues in the financial markets who are as much to blame as well.

Its time we knew what the true Root causes of these crippling rises that cause the elderly and the poor with more agony. Perhaps Niall Aslen or someone like him may like to comment.

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## Re:Energy suppliers are preying on the poorest

Posted by LYDIA REID - 2008/09/06 16:40

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The answer to that comes in one word greed.

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## Re:Energy suppliers are preying on the poorest

Posted by Levenax - 2008/09/06 20:56

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It was folly to deregulate the market for domestic energy. Energy supply and distribution is a strategic matter and should not be in the hands of foreign multinationals.

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## Re:Energy suppliers are preying on the poorest

Posted by Clare - 2008/09/07 00:09

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Levenax wrote:

It was folly to deregulate the market for domestic energy. Energy supply and distribution is a strategic matter and should not be in the hands of foreign multinationals.

I agree Lev. There are many things Thatcher will never be forgiven for but this is at the top of my list, the privatisation of the utilities. It should never have been allowed to happen. Then later the Tories added VAT to fuel bills.

What other area could coolly announce rises of 35%? And what does the so-called energy watchdog do all day? Why have successive governments sat back and allowed energy companies to hold guns to our heads with increase after increase? Energy bills now come second only to the rent or the mortgage. It is truly a shocking state of affairs. I don't care much about windfall taxes. I want energy costs down. What use are windfall taxes when the consumer will see damn all from them. Only a fall in fuel costs will mean anything in the real world.

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## Re:Energy suppliers are preying on the poorest

Posted by Robin T Cox - 2008/09/07 08:48

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It was folly to deregulate the market for domestic energy. Energy supply and distribution is a strategic matter and should not be in the hands of foreign multinationals.

The UK energy market is not deregulated.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gas\\_and\\_Electricity\\_Markets\\_Authority](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gas_and_Electricity_Markets_Authority)

However, the regulator is doing a pathetic job: in particular in failing to promote competition among suppliers. That's the issue.

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## Re:Energy suppliers are preying on the poorest

Posted by DoricMan - 2008/09/07 10:37

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Here is an interesting comment on Pensioner unclaimed benefits at:

<http://www.citywire.co.uk/personal/home.aspx>

Look for the link "A number to blow you away"

We make it as difficult and impenetrable for our elderly to get what rightly belongs to them.

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## Re:Energy suppliers are preying on the poorest

Posted by Levenax - 2008/09/07 11:12

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Robin T Cox wrote:

The UK energy market is not deregulated.

Effectively it is because, as you rightly say, the regulator is a toothless tiger.

The infrastructure of generation and transmission should be in government control. The result of neglect is that the UK imports 5% of its electricity from France. This nuclear generated imported power is boosting French GDP and harming thr UKs's already dire balance of payments.

The UK government needs to build nuclear power capacity as a matter of urgency and start burning more home produced coal of which there is an abundance.

In Scotland we're a bit better off but there is no room for complacency.

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## Re:Energy suppliers are preying on the poorest

Posted by Clare - 2008/09/07 12:15

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Robin T Cox wrote:

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It was folly to deregulate the market for domestic energy. Energy supply and distribution is a strategic matter and should not be in the hands of foreign multinationals.

The UK energy market is not deregulated.  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gas\\_and\\_Electricity\\_Markets\\_Authority](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gas_and_Electricity_Markets_Authority)

However, the regulator is doing a pathetic job: in particular in failing to promote competition among suppliers. That's the issue.

It was privatised and turned into a money-making machine with the consumer trapped between the sharks Robin. It isn't and never was about competition it was about making money for the few. As for the principle of competition that was never going to happen. Every single energy company now is going the same route. They are robbing us all blind and a government is sitting by allowing it to happen. I would also say I am sympathetic towards pensioners being unable to heat their homes but I don't think it is the case that they are the only group suffering and I really think we need to stop highlighting only one group. We are all being ripped off bigtime and it is high time something was done about it.

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## Re:Energy suppliers are preying on the poorest

Posted by Bananaman - 2008/09/07 12:53

Levenax wrote:

The UK government needs to build nuclear power capacity as a matter of urgency and start burning more home produced coal of which there is an abundance.  
In Scotland we're a bit better off but there is no room for complacency.

A coal industry also systematically dismantled by Thatcher and her government in order to achieve their political objective of smashing the power of working people to at least have some input into the conditions under which they work, i.e. through the trades union movement of whom the NUM were the major industrial power source on the worker's side.

Most of the pits she closed were viable then but will not be now because once you close a pit it deteriorates and becomes unsafe to work. This act of economic vandalism and the unemployment created was paid for out of the North Sea oil revenues.

AS to nuclear power I disagree mainly on the cost and waste disposal arguments.

Whatever energy relief could come from nuclear generation, the cost is a mushroom cloud. The Department of Energy recently announced that the estimated cost of dealing with the waste of existing nuclear power plants has risen in the last seven years from a prior guess of \$57.5 billion to \$96.2 billion. In trying to put his best face on this recalculation, Ward Sproat, the department's civilian nuclear waste director, said, "It's not all taxpayer money." He said 80 percent of the cost will come from nuclear ratepayers. "I would argue pretty strenuously the cost of doing nothing is a lot higher."

Asked whether a surge in new plants would require a new repository, Sproat said, "If there's a major nuclear renaissance with a very large number - you know, a large number of new plants in the future, the second repository may - and I'm underlining the word 'may' - be needed."

The cost of plants is even more of a plume, for both taxpayers and ratepayers. Last week for example, Progress Energy Florida announced a proposed rate increase of 31 percent, in part to pay for two new nuclear reactors, which will cost an estimated \$17 billion. The Orlando Sentinel reported that the nuclear project is "an enormous investment likely to bring annual rate hikes for nearly a decade." Florida Power & Light followed up this week with a proposed 7 percent increase, also in part because of expansion and construction of nuclear plants.

The Wall Street Journal has reported that the estimated cost of nuclear reactors has doubled, tripled, or quadrupled in recent years to an average ranging between \$5 billion to \$12 billion per plant. It quoted an official of Moody's Investors Service as saying such costs "have blown by our highest estimate." According to the Chicago Tribune, Moody's likens the underestimating of nuclear plant costs by utilities to pricing a house without the appliances, furnishings, and landscaping.

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## Re:Energy suppliers are preying on the poorest

Posted by LYDIA REID - 2008/09/07 15:50

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Even now, I miss the feeling of sitting in front of our coal fire on a cold night; it is an abiding warm and lovely memory. I was a child and gave no thought to how we got our coal.

I do not come from a coal mining family but I have read enough about coalmines to, never want to work in one and to, never ask any other person to work in one. I am sure they are more modern now but still dangerous for the miners health and safety.

Why can we not concentrate on wind power, wave power, and any other power, which does not involve the dangers of coal or nuclear power? We in Scotland have the capability and the land; I love the scenery in Scotland. However, if I had to choose between a pretty landscape and the dependence on foreign oil until we can use our own and the price we will pay this winter for gas and electricity I think I would want any other power that is safe and clean.

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## Re:Energy suppliers are preying on the poorest

Posted by Brenna1508 - 2008/09/07 16:35

Lydia asked: Why can we not concentrate on wind power, wave power, We already are Lydia. Scotland is much windier than England, Wales or Northern Ireland, and also has green hydro-electric power. It has set a target of getting half its electricity from renewable sources such as wind power by 2020, compared to the UK's goal of generating about a third from renewables.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/2008/aug/10/scotland.energy?gusrc=rss&feed=environment>

There is another article at:

<http://mendocoastcurrent.wordpress.com/2008/06/30/scottish-energy-firms-to-bring-hydro-power-to-the-people/> which states: This summer, the government-sponsored Forum for Renewable Energy Development in Scotland is expected to call for scores of hydroelectricity schemes to be built, ranging from dams in northern glens to up to 100 projects harnessing power from rivers. I remember burning apple logs at Christmas on an open fire and the coke (and slack) we used in the old black range. When we'd get home you could "smell" the warmth as you came in through the front door. :)

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## Re:Energy suppliers are preying on the poorest

Posted by LYDIA REID - 2008/09/07 17:56

Brenna1508 wrote:

Lydia asked: Why can we not concentrate on wind power, wave power, We already are Lydia. Scotland is much windier than England, Wales or Northern Ireland, and also has green hydro-electric power. It has set a target of getting half its electricity from renewable sources such as wind power by 2020, compared to the UK's goal of generating about a third from renewables.

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And a world with very ferw asthma sufferers.

We too had an old range and a massive house because we were a big family and the coal fires kept it warm as toast. The ashes were used in the winter to keep the pavements and paths clear of ice and snow. The fireguard was used to air yer breeks for the morning so when we put them on they were cosy.

My dad used to bake fantastic cakes in an oven that was very difficult to control.

The only thing that ever put me off the range was when my cat got shut in the oven and cooked.

Ah memories.

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Back to the subject, yes I know the effort Scotland is making to go with wind and wave but we could do so much better. The Government have refused some of the wind farms because of complaints over the view. We cannot afford to be that fussy at the moment we need to get independent from all these big foreign companies making millions out of us.

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