

International public inquiry "The Social and Economic Impact of Rural Wind Farms"

Dear Sirs,

This is greatly needed as it must be a case of the science chasing the money. In the Highlands of Scotland more and more Wind Farms are proposed which will, in short order, destroy the very tourist trade on which we exist. At our recent Clan Gathering we enjoyed the company of many Australians who were much entranced by our scenery but horrified by the wind farms already here. Why destroy such beautiful country was their recurring question. Very much every proposal is fought vigorously by the local area and often rejected by local planning authorities only to be foisted upon us by ministerial edict. The missionary zeal of many politicians has amazed us all and the greenwash effect has destroyed democracy as we believed in. The financial benefits of these wind farms are not enjoyed locally except in very limited Community Benefits, which are most misnamed, and a very limited opportunity for employment. A twenty five turbine array locally now employs one person fulltime and a further two mobile engineers on an average of one day per week. They are not local residents. Land rental is to absentee landlords and profits are to an overseas company. No tax is paid but millions in Renewable Obligation payments are paid to the developers. This brings neither social or economic benefit to the area whilst causing damage to wildlife and tourism and above all to our Quality of Life. Noise, flicker, and visual intrusion are all established factors although the Industry and our Government are in denial. The greatest legacy of Wind Farms will be the destruction of communities as the so called Community Benefit so divides those communities in its implementation. Community Benefit by its name suggests to the whole Community but experience shows that the distribution of the cash tends to support certain elements in preference to others. They say "Money is the root of all evil" and certainly this has proved a divisive area. Community Benefit would surely be if all received discounted electricity or communal heating. Problem is what is the Community? When the Wind Farms are so large and so many Communities may have a claim, the definition is very complicated.

The efficiency is consistently below 21% and as low as 2-4% for a great deal of the time. Base load must still be provided by either Nuclear, an option that the First Minister has denied, or fossil fuel technology. The only thing that drives the industry are the subsidies that the UK government has, by slight of hand, disguised as Renewable Obligation Certificates. In stead of payment through taxes we are all obliged to support these companies through a 14% and rising surcharge on our electricity bills, horrendously more for businesses. This is simply not sustainable.

This whole area is driven by Climate Change and the very dodgy science behind it from the hockey stick effect to the IPCC and the Stern report. Weather is cyclical as is Climate. It will change. We will have another Ice Age. I suspect that little man will do has much effect on it.

It was the commercial lobbying by Enron, a disgraced US company, that got us the original Kyoto Agreement. Scientists within the American Physical Society have tried to open up the discussion but have been thwarted by the mega financial influences within the Climate Industry. We really need to go back to basics and decide what is the best way to protect our future, husband our resources and support our populations. Wind is only an element in that but we believe that at the moment it is a disaster waiting to happen. This is surely a Scam which will dwarf the financial markets, our own politicians expenses scandal and the dubious science behind the IPCC, much I am shamed to say from our own University of East Anglia.

In twenty five years, by which time we will possibly have vast reserves of Fusion Energy, are we going to have a “War of the Worlds” landscape of rusty defunct turbines littering our landscape with insufficient financial reserves to de-commission. What a legacy to leave to our children.

John Graham