

Newspaper articles regarding Wind Power

Extracted from emails circulated to Anne Forbes. Not arranged in any order

<http://www.newsandstar.co.uk/opinion/viewarticle.aspx?id=3D146113>

Our birds have disappeared

Published on 20/10/2004

Where have all the plovers gone: Golden plovers were once a familiar sight at Siddick, but not any more, says Dave Taylor

I am replying to Margaret Kennon's letter about wind turbines (October 18).

It's a shame Margaret never witnessed the thousands of waders roosting in the fields next to the shore along Siddick during high tide or seen the large flocks of curlew, redshank, lapwing and golden plover swirling around in a strong wind.

Since the wind turbines went up, those birds have disappeared from Siddick.

Wind turbines do have a damaging effect on wildlife, especially wild birds. Go and see for yourself ', there's next to none there.

DAVE TAYLOR.

THE TIMES

October 20, 2004

European Briefing

Wind of change in the power game

By Carl Mortishead

WIND, our masters in Downing Street say, is the future. To be precise, almost 10 per cent of the future by 2010 and more than a third by 2050.

E.ON, the German power generator, is already doing its bit for the renewable energy future, erecting 30 wind turbines at Scroby Sands, 1.2 miles offshore of Great Yarmouth. Pretty as whirligigs, their blades were spinning last week, energised by a southwesterly gale.

E.ON is proud of the scheme, which is already pumping electrons into the national grid and, unlike some other wind energy schemes, it is popular. No blot on a rural landscape, the offshore windmills add a bit of style to an otherwise dull vista of sand, waves and dreary seaside amusements.

The view is fine but what lies over the horizon? Is anyone seriously contemplating what life would be like in a world built on the strength of a sea breeze? The short-term target of 10 per cent renewables within five years is daunting - we are currently shy of 3 per cent - and E.ON is getting a bit anxious about the slow progress in permitting and planning new wind farms.

Every opinion poll suggests that the public want renewables, and E.ON urges the Government to be a bit more aggressive in its support for schemes stuck in the planning process.

In the UK the fight is mainly over backyards and spoilt views of green hills. Back in Germany, where there is experience of wind power, E.ON is considering more profound questions about its effectiveness.

At present wind meets 4 per cent of Germany's demand for electricity but even that modest contribution is not without problems. In Wind Report 2004, E.ON raises questions about further expansion of wind energy in Germany and Europe. The problem is not the view of the hills but reliability.

Wind power needs back-up for the simple reason that it is occasional and random. An analysis of the wind power fed into E.ON's German power grid during 2003 showed that for more than half the year, the power supplied to the grid

was less than 11 per cent of the built capacity of all the wind turbines. To put it simply, much of the time, those blades were moving slowly, or not all.

Worse still, the Germans found that the wind tended to drop during periods of peak consumption when Germans were turning on heaters or airconditioners, a trend confirmed in last year's summer heatwave. The stable high-pressure weather systems that produce sweltering summer and clear, cold winter days tend to be windless. Back-up fossil fuel generators are needed to supply the juice when the wind drops but they must be paid for, whether running or idle. According to E.ON, shadow power stations need to be available to cover as much as 80 per cent of the wind power capacity.

E.ON's British team point out that Britain is an island and therefore a more reliable source of wind energy than Germany. Yet it admits that available generation capacity, taking into account days of weak or no wind, is 30 per cent of maximum capacity.

Wind forecasts hour by hour are key but deviations from forecast can be high, as much as 2,900 megawatts in Germany, equal to half the wind turbine capacity in its network.

Spinning merrily, the Scroby Sands wind farm promises much but delivers a little bit less. There is something oddly British about the vision of a wind-driven future, a sort of William Morris utopia, in which pain-free power is supplied to rustic but happy citizens in a rural arcadia.

Is it what we really want? Returning from Great Yarmouth, my train was cancelled and I waited for 40 minutes, wondering whether an intermittent and random Britain was already here and now.

<http://www.rte.ie/news/2004/1019/derrybrien.html>

Construction caused landslide, court told

19 October 2004 13:00

Engineering and geology experts have told a District Court in Galway they believe last year's landslide in Derrybrien was caused by construction activity on a 60m wind farm.

Galway County Council and the Shannon Regional Fisheries Board are taking three ESB subsidiary companies and the contracting firm ASCON to court for polluting a local river which was at the centre of the landslide zone.

Dr Michael Rodgers, a senior lecturer in civil engineering at NUI Galway, told the court he was convinced that the landslide on 16 October 2003 was triggered by activity around turbine base Number 68.

Dr Rodgers said could not accept a suggestion by counsel for main sub-contractor Ascon, that the landslide had started further down the hill and had pulled thousands of tonnes of material from above.

Mr Bernard Murphy, an engineering geologist, said he saw no evidence that the landslide was related to a natural event and in his view it was related to construction activity on the site.

Western Morning News

TECHNOLOGY THAT HAS FAILED TO LIVE UP TO THE 'GREEN' DREAM

Date : 07.10.04

The huge E.On Netz Group which commissioned the report is one of the largest electricity generators in Europe. Within its control area in Germany there is a large wind carpet of 6,250 megawatts (MW) of turbines.

Its report observes:

Current UK policy is based on assumptions of 30 per cent load factor onshore and 35 per cent offshore. In fact, in 2003 the UK's onshore turbines achieved only 24 per cent. Over the E.ON controlled area, the wind turbines never achieved more than 80 per cent of their theoretical maximum.

The 6,250 MW of turbines are theoretically capable of meeting 33 per cent of demand in the E.ON Netz area, but in fact for half of the year it contributed only 3.6 per cent.

The wind direction/speed changes quickly, and the wind generators produce very large power swings, both up and down, in short periods of time. Rapid swings present significant challenges to the grid operators trying to balance the grid.

On November 19, 2003 the wind power indeed dropped very sharply by 3,640 MW within six hours, with an average value of 10 MW per minute. Wind power is only as reliable as the weather forecasts. Standby generation to a level of over 60 per cent of the installed capacity of the wind power is needed to provide instantaneous support when the forecast is in error. This is costly.

Power demand peaks, resulting from cold weather in winter and hot weather in summer, tend to coincide with periods of low wind resulting from stable high-pressure weather systems. So, when you need power because of the weather, wind can't help.

Wind power requires much more high and extra-high voltage grid cabling. Wind power has destabilised the E.ON Netz grid.

The UK's current energy policy places an extremely heavy dependence on randomly intermittent wind generators, but is based on unjustifiably favourable assumptions about the performance of these generators. The wind is too weak to generate much power: load factor was only 14.8 per cent in Germany as a whole. The E.ON Netz report casts very serious doubt on the ability of wind power to do the job effectively at reasonable cost.

World's largest solar plant in China

Published on 22-Oct-2004

URL: http://www.edie.net/news/news_story.asp?id=3D9071

The world's largest solar power plant is being developed in China, to supply power to the city of Dunhuang in Gansu Province.

The World's largest solar plant is being planned in China

Representatives from China's National Energy Bureau, the solar energy industry, regional and local governments, and WWF met to discuss the development of a demonstration project for an 8MWp grid-connected solar PV plant in the Gobi desert.

"We want to create a solar revolution," said Gan Lin, WWF China's Climate and Energy Program Director. "Our aim is for solar energy to provide 20 times the government's target."

WWF aim to develop 30GW of power generation capacity by 2020, equal to 3% of the total power generation capacity, or 1% of the total electricity to be generated by 2020. They plan to realise this through three major developments: large scale solar power plants in western deserts of China; solar roof applications in buildings in coastal cities; and rural electrification for independent households and village power systems.

The project combines private sector investment and international aid with government investments, in contrast to former projects formulated by government investment or subsidies alone.

High cost is still the main barrier hindering solar PV development.

The National Development and Reform Commission (NRDC) said that, by 2010 China's central government plans to set up two 5MW solar PV demonstration sites, and by 2020, the government's current aim is to generate 1.6GW of energy from solar PV.

China's main source of energy at present - coal - accounts for 75% of the energy used in the country. Per capita, energy consumption is less than half of the world average.

If economic development continues at current rates, energy consumption in China will double by 2020.

By David Hopkins

Independent - today - 27/11/04 - as published.

Sir, Tony Juniper wonders if government is serious about its 'war' on climate change (Letters, November 23).

Without making a judgement on the reality or otherwise of human-induced climatic change, it seems to me that the government cannot believe an iota of its own story: that we must reduce atmospheric CO₂ concentration by about a third. This would require a gigantic cut in emissions and many years for it to take effect.

If Tony Blair truly believed that "the threat of climate change is greater than global terrorism", we would already be decommissioning the 747 fleet, promoting e-conferencing and e-commerce, reducing the number and size of road vehicles, increasing rail and canal transport of freight, totally subsidising energy efficiency and much, much more. What, however, are we spending our money on? The 2003 Energy White Paper says it will be a billion pounds a year as 'effective subsidy' to the renewables industry – almost entirely windpower - by 2010.

At the moment wind power generates about four thousandths of the UK's electricity and saves little more than one thousandth of our total CO₂ emission. When it finally misses the target, I fear that a grinning politician will appear on the TV screens assuring us it is quite safe, and nuclear power is the only option left! Is this what they have always wanted?

Dr JOHN ETHERINGTON, Llanhowell, Pembrokeshire.

THE RENEWABLE ENERGY DEBATE

This article by Henry Thoresby, Chairman of *LSE Environmental Initiatives Network, appeared originally in the September 2004 edition of Business-Money.

The proposed expansion of our windpower industry is fast becoming one of the most controversial issues facing New Labour. Supporters of this technology claim that it could make a major contribution to solving the twin problems of Global Warming and Security of Energy Supply. Its opponents say that windpower is expensive, divisive, unreliable and unlikely to make any serious impact on either of these problems.

Many of the arguments against wind farms are of a technical nature, it is therefore not surprising that the casual 'untechnical' observer takes it for granted that technology which makes use of a free resource must automatically be beneficial. This public ignorance of the environmental and social costs of windpower has been extremely helpful to politicians, developers and industry lobbyists but increasingly their claims are being challenged for we cannot as a country waste time and money on the massive development of windpower if it is irrelevant and environmentally unfriendly as its critics allege.

There is another issue, people who have no firm views either way are troubled by the methods used by windpower companies to secure planning permission and by the Government's use of the Electricity Act to bypass planning legislation when faced by communities hostile to wind power. Huge profits are at stake here, as are numerous careers, which raises some suspicion about the information used to promote wind and the huge number of applications now appearing before local planning authorities. This being so, it may be helpful to look at some facts.

Looking first at the question of emissions, if one accepts the premise that CO₂ emissions are directly linked to climate change, it is important to know what contribution the UK could actually make to the reduction of Global CO₂ emissions if say 10% of our electricity was generated by wind. The answer is less than 0.1%. It is a simple calculation. The UK is responsible for about 2.86% of Global CO₂ emissions [say 3%] one third of which is attributable to the power industry [ie: 1%], 10% of that 1% is 0.1% which means that less than one thousandth of the global annual load would be saved by our generating 10% of our electricity from wind, a figure that will diminish further as the economies of China and India get into gear. This minimal contribution will be even further reduced by Government policies on civil aviation and road use which makes one wonder what lies behind New Labour's rush to industrialise the countryside..

There is a further point here. Windpower is an intermittent, weather dependent energy source which when it feeds into the Grid relies on standby 'backup' from conventional power stations. 'Backup' power must run continuously if we

are to avoid 'blackouts' and inevitably this consumes energy and discharges CO2. The 2003 West Danish Grid [ELECTRA] System Report will give some idea of what is involved. This identified Spinning Reserve capacity as between 300MW and 500 MW per 1000 MW of installed capacity which means that with a Danish load factor of about 20%, 'backup' can be of greater capacity than realised generation..

Turning to Security of Supply The 2003 Digest of Energy Statistics gives UK windpower a load factor of 24.1% which means that it is a highly unreliable source of power incapable of providing the baseload power that is essential to our economic well-being. What it can provide is supplementary power as part of a general energy mix which is storeable in very tiny amounts ie: via mountain pumped storage. The question must now be asked, is wind the most efficient, economical and generally benign form of renewable energy available and would the subsidies we now pay to the wind industry be better employed elsewhere ? Biomass, geothermal, wave, tidal, micro-hydro, hydrogen and solar power all have a contribution to make and advocates of these technologies believe that they are more reliable than wind, more benign and far better at creating long-term employment.

At this point one may reasonably ask why the Government has committed itself so thoroughly to a technology that alienates significant sections of the electorate and shows little prospect of making any useful long-term contribution to the two problems it seeks to address. The answer is twofold, partly because New Labour has committed us to generating 10% of our energy from renewables by 2010 without properly understanding what that commitment involved and the way this might skew and misdirect investment and partly because it believes that support for wind power guarantees the 'Green' vote. This is no longer the case, many 'Greens' are deeply distrustful of wind companies and their trade organisation the British Wind Energy Association and many have concluded that windpower is environmentally unfriendly and fundamentally unsustainable.

The high cost of wind is another factor that may change ministerial thinking. Wind power is hugely expensive and it only survives as an industry because we are required to subsidise it through our electricity bills. This is implemented through the system of Renewable Obligations Certificates whereby suppliers who cannot source a given proportion of their electricity from renewables are required to buy that missing percentage from a renewable source. According to the Royal Academy of Engineering, Offshore Wind now costs 7.2p per Kilowatt Hour while Onshore costs 5.5p, Gas 3.4p and Nuclear 2.3p. This raises doubts about the economic viability of wind and the political wisdom of passing these costs on to the consumer..

If I were a wind farmer I would be worried. Politicians are a fickle breed and New Labour is well aware that the technology has many drawbacks and is the source of much disquiet amongst scientists, economists, environmentalists, engineers and many Labour voters. With the Conservative Party now showing signs of unhappiness over wind and increasing concern about 'blackouts' and Security of Supply, 2005 could be a critical year for the industry.

London School of Economics

<<http://www.itvregions.com/news.php?region=3DWales&content=3D14541>>

Today's News Headlines

Howells hits out at windfarm "madness" 25 Nov, 2004, 12:33

UK Government minister Kim Howells, MP for Pontypridd, has attacked the growth of windfarms as "madness" and says people should use less energy instead. His comments come as plans are considered for a new windfarm near his constituency. The Assembly Government wants 10 percent of our electricity to come from renewable sources like wind power by 2010. That's likely to mean hundreds more wind turbines on our hilltops.

Message from Mal =AD SOCME=B9s websmaster.

"ITV Wales News" announced at 3pm that they would like e-mails and text messages giving peoples opinions on what Dr Kim Howells MP announced this morning.

I didn't catch the text message phone number or the e-mail address but the ITV Wales newsroom can be e-mailed from:

http://www.itvregions.com/form_news.php?region=3DWales

Kim Howells interview has been removed from the News Headlines listing at :

<http://www.itvregions.com/index.php?region=3Dwales>

But at the time of me sending this e-mail it was still available at:

<http://www.itvregions.com/news.php?region=3DWales&content=3D14541>
<<http://www.itvregions.com/news.php?region=3DWales&content=3D14541>>

The West Highland Free Press was co-founded by Brian Wilson, former Minister of Energy, who still has great influence on its content. He has promoted wind power stations relentlessly (now promoting nuclear power with equal fervour!) so it comes as no surprise that the WHFP refers to the eminent scientist, Dr. David Bellamy, only as a 'entertainer'.

It is in this same newspaper that Wilson, while Minister of Energy, made the sardonic and flippant comment 'three of whom are now dead, presumably from overwork' which upset me far more than being one of seven persons named on BWEA's website hit list 'we know where you live'.

Brian Wilson's shameful comment was made in reference to :-

- 1) Joseph Lythgoe - environmentalist and founder of Country Guardian - who died a few years ago.
- 2) Geoffrey Ratcliff - eminent engineer, manager of the UK Energy Research Centre for 25 years and consultant to Country Guardian - who died 4 years ago.
- 3) My late husband, Geoffrey Scott Kelly (architect, F.R.I.B.A), who died in July 1999.

Is it any wonder that the destruction of our beautiful countryside with alien industrial machinery is a matter of indifference to one who is so careless of the feelings of his fellow men? It does help to explain the sheer indifference to the distressing divisions and misery caused in local communities by wind farms. "Killing fields" comes to mind.

West Highland Free Press
27-11-04

"No evidence that wind power works," claims Bellamy

David Bellamy rails against wind farms during Monday's meeting in Portree

Nearly a hundred people from all over Skye travelled to the Aros Centre in Portree on Monday night to hear arguments against the burgeoning west-coast wind farming industry.

They heard both from objectors to the principle of wind farms and from objectors who had been mobilised because of the effects of particular developments. The big draw was the chance to hear TV entertainer David Bellamy deliver his damning verdict on 'wind factories' and the damage they do to the environment.

Mr Bellamy began with a crowd-pleasing local angle. He said: "As you may know I am not a lover of wind farms, or 'wind factories' as I call them. they do have one good effect - they kill midges by the million. They are sucked up by the sails and actually decrease their efficiency. They roughen the sails and slow them up."

He went on to declare that Skye should be pursuing the things that made it special. Prominent among these, he announced, was the fact that it was a good place to retire to because it was 'far from the madding crowd'.

"Wales is awash with wind farms and there are plans for many in England," he warned "You'll find yourselves last in the line to get rid of them when a newer form of renewable comes along that actually works."

But, he said, he was not only on Skye to highlight the effects wind farms have on wildlife, people and places.

Mr Bellamy wanted people to know that wind was simply not an effective means of producing electricity. "Denmark have pushed the world into this and now they are backing away," he said. "There's no evidence that wind power works." It would, he claimed, account for only 1/4,000th of Britain's energy use.

As a truly green alternative to wind he said Britain should be focusing on becoming more energy-efficient and

argued the way ahead was to harness the potential of wave and tidal power.

He said that tidal power was available 23-and-a-half hours a day and was a reliable energy source because, unlike wind, producers would know when it was available. He added: "Some people have said tidal may cause damage to the marine environment but its damage can hardly be any greater than the damage caused by wind farms on land."

He closed by repeating the claim he made in Stornoway in September that Tony Blair had chosen three potential sites for nuclear power stations, all of them in Scotland, and asked: "What chance for wind power if one of them goes up?"

A member of the audience makes a point (FP 700/B)

The next speaker was Bob Graham from Moray who founded the "Protect Rural Scotland" party. "Wind farms are irrelevant both as a source of sustainable electricity and as a means of reducing carbon dioxide," said Mr Graham.

He then showed some slides of birds which he claimed had been killed by turbine blades. As well as wildlife, he also feared for the environment. To erect 22 turbines would take 15,000 tons of concrete, he claimed, resulting in damage to peat moorland and possible releases of carbon dioxide.

He claimed that pressure groups such as Friends of the Earth were twisting the science to make scare stories promoting their cause. His source for this allegation was an article in the 'Sunday Telegraph', he added.

However, he was criticised for his own misuse of science by a speaker from the floor. "I think that using the 'Sunday Telegraph' to promote a scientific argument is standing on very dodgy ground. I have spoken to their science correspondent. His name is Adrian Berry, and he admitted that in several cases he hadn't even read the reports he was writing about."

Mr Graham replied that he was only a layman and had to rely on what he read, but he added that this was a report by an Oxford academic.

The other two speakers on the panel were both from Cumbria.

Meeting chairman Jeremy Isaacs appears to find it hard to stay awake during Bellamy's rambling contribution

David Brierley listed a catalogue of complaints from people living close to four wind farms in Cumbria which, he said, were making them ill. The noise level for some houses was four times to

(section missing)

ment in principle. In fact there were another three wind farms within 10 kilometres of his area and these all operated 'without too many problems'. It was only the effects that one badly-sited development had caused that made them oppose these turbines.

One of few voices raised in favour of wind farms was that of Ross Cowie of Portree. He said: "I don't think we've been dealing with the issue here. I actually come from Skye and, as much as I love golden eagles, I think that the people of this island and their culture and language are far more important".

"Skye supplied one-third of the men that fought in the Crimean War; gave 10,000 men to various wars over the course of 40 years; lost 45,000 people to the Clearances ! I think she's due something back. If a crofter goes out in all conditions to raise a sheep that, after a year's labour, earns them about £35, can you blame them for saying 'yes' when they're offered a thousand times that amount for allowing some of their land to be used for a wind farm?"

<http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/L25577006.htm>

Birds not being killed by wind farms -ecologist

25 Nov 2004 16:15:10 GMT

Source: Reuters

LONDON, Nov 25 (Reuters) - Two major offshore wind farms in Denmark are giving the lie to fears that birds are being killed by flying into the huge vanes of such installations, a conference heard on Thursday.

In fact, not only were birds not dying, the Danish farms had actually benefitted the local environment, ecologist Charlotte Boesen of Denmark's Energi E2 energy trading and generation firm told the conference on wind energy.

Birds were simply flying over or around the huge packs of turbines, and the seabed foundations had created an artificial reef that was attracting new species to colonise and providing a haven for fish as trawling there was banned.

"So far the observed effects have been positive," she said.

The potential impact on local wildlife is a key objection to wind farms, along with their intrusive appearance.

But their supporters disagree.

"The wind farm debate is heating up and becoming more polarised. We want to challenge the myths -- that they kill birds ... and deter tourists," Alison Hill of the British Wind Energy Association (BWEA) told the meeting.

With the Kyoto treaty on cutting carbon dioxide emissions about to come into force, making governments -- except for the United States -- search for clean and renewable sources of energy, the wind turbine's star is in the ascendant.

The European Wind Energy Association, organisers of the conference, says it can hit the target of generating 75 gigawatts (GW) of electricity -- or 5.5 percent of EU demand -- by 2010, of which 10 GW could be offshore.

With initiative and government intervention to remove long term support for the CO2 emitting fossil fuel power industry, this could rise to 12 percent by 2020.

But Rowena Langston of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds -- which says global warming must be stopped -- said development was being pushed ahead with scant reference to the impact on the local environment and in particular bird life.

"Until there is more robust information, we are not going to overstep our conservation brief and say a project should go ahead regardless," she told the meeting.

Lawyer and wind farm promoter Marcus Trinick, noted the apparent paradox. He said climate change was the overriding prerogative and that conservationists and the green energy lobby should be on the same side.

Developer Harvey West said much of the problem lay with the industry having failed to consult the locals and having been secretive about the environmental impact assessments of their schemes. This had created enmity and mistrust

Press and Journal:

ANTI-WINDFARM GROUP ATTACKS SNH FOR NOT OPPOSING SKYE PLAN

EILIDH DAVIES

09:00 - 24 November 2004

An ANTI-windfarm group has hit out at SNH's decision not to oppose proposals for a scheme on Skye.

SNH reviewed its position on plans for an Amec windfarm with 27 turbines at Edinbane in the north of the island, following new information on eagle activity in the area.

However, Dr Greg Mudge, SNH manager for West Highland, said yesterday: "We remain of the view that the existing data on eagle flight activity is limited and that an assessment of the likely impacts of the scheme on golden eagles still contains an element of uncertainty."

However, he added that "revised analysis" by Amec provided assurance that risks to the local eagle population could be managed.

John Hodgson, a spokesman for Skye Windfarms Action Group, (Swag) said SNH's findings "systematically understated" the impact of the proposed Edinbane windfarm on birds.

He added: "Swag, supported by RSPB, has lodged a formal complaint with the Legal Implementation and Enforcement

Unit of the European Commission."

The comments from SNH and Mr Hodgson came after a public meeting was held at the Aros Centre, in Portree, on Monday night.

Nearly 200 people attended the meeting which discussed proposals for the Edinbane windfarm and another at Ben Aketil.

Planning permission for the Edinbane scheme has been approved, but it has yet to be issued, while the Ben Aketil proposals are still at the planning stage.

Several speakers addressed the meeting, including well-known environmentalist David Bellamy and former TV mogul Sir Jeremy Isaacs, who lives in the Edinbane area.

Mr Hodgson said: "The meeting went very well and was extremely well-attended.

"Members of the audience also brought up some very interesting and important questions."

Energy Bosses Urge EU to Back Nuclear Power

BELGIUM: November 26, 2004

BRUSSELS - Europe's nuclear energy generators urged European Union policy makers on Thursday to include nuclear energy as a central part in the bloc's energy mix and future planning.

"The nuclear industry already makes a valuable contribution to achieving Europe's objectives in terms of security of energy supply, support for the EU economy and environmental protection," said a declaration signed by many of Europe's top energy firms. The companies encouraged EU institutions and the union's 25 member states to keep all options open and promote investment in energy sources with very low or no carbon emissions, such as nuclear and renewables. "In the coming years, oil resources will continue to dwindle, putting political decision-makers under increasing pressure," it said. "We firmly believe that nuclear-generated electricity should remain at the heart of Europe's energy supply system for the foreseeable future."

Proponents of nuclear energy say it is environmentally friendly because it does not emit greenhouse gases blamed for global warming, but environmentalists and others worry about the storage of radioactive waste and safety of nuclear facilities.

Countries such as France and Finland are developing their nuclear energy programmes, while Germany is phasing it out. New European Union Energy Commissioner Andris Piebalgs said earlier this month EU states can decide for themselves whether to use nuclear energy but must handle the waste within their own borders. His predecessor, Spain's Loyola de Palacio, was considered a strong nuclear proponent. Nuclear energy has an image problem with many Europeans, who fear a repeat of the 1986 Chernobyl disaster.

The industry is increasingly portraying nuclear as a green fuel, while the EU tries to meet its commitments under the Kyoto Protocol, which curbs emissions of greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide (CO2). Nuclear power generation does not emit CO2. "CO2 reduction as well as phasing out nuclear as we have now in Germany...doesn't go together," Gert Maichel, Chief Executive of RWE Power, said at a news conference. According to the European Atomic Forum (Foratom), a trade association for the nuclear energy industry in Europe, about one third of the electricity produced in the 25-nation bloc is nuclear-generated. Thirteen EU states use nuclear, it says.

Nuclear power plants produce roughly 17 percent of the world's electricity, it says.

Foratom said in a statement 20 energy company heads had signed the declaration backing the nuclear power option. They included bosses from Belgium's Electrabel, Germany's RWE Power and E.ON, Spain's Iberdrola, Sweden's Vattenfall and Britain's Urenco.

Press and Journal:

HUGE RISE IN CITY POWER BILL MAY HIT TAXPAYERS

JOHN ROBERTSON

09:00 - 24 November 2004

A Rise in Aberdeen City Council's energy costs that could impact on council tax payers was discussed yesterday.

Officials are warning that the authority's electricity bill will soar by as much as 45% in the next financial year.

That means residents already feeling the pinch in their household power bills could be asked to pay a second time through their council tax.

The council's resources management committee discussed the issue yesterday.

A =A3450,000 rise on the council's current =A31million electricity bill was predicted in a report to the committee

The existing supply contract, for more than 100kw of electricity, runs out in March.

Neil Fletcher, convener of the committee, said: "It just shows what a good deal we got last time. Throughout the public sector we are all starting to feel the effects of the rise in fuel prices due to the war in the Gulf."

Mr Fletcher also pointed to the number of measures that the council has in place to use less electricity, such as energy efficient light-bulbs and awareness campaigns.

Councillors discussed expanding the consortium that it is part of to negotiate a lower price for their energy.

Aberdeenshire Council used to be part of the consortium but recently left.

Kevin Stewart said: "Can we expand that consortium even more, can we examine our capital working to get the cost down even more for our city, which is the oil and gas capital of Europe?"

Crawford Langley, corporate director for legal and democratic services, said: "There is a constant effort to make the consortia as wide as possible, Aberdeenshire for their own reasons decided to leave."

Committee members agreed to the recommendation to suspend standing orders to allow council officials to accept tenders for electricity supply contracts for next year.

Suppliers have been asked to submit tenders on Wednesday, January 5, for the new contract with the city council.

An independent consultant will analyse the offers.