

Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas
Y Pwyllgor Amgylchedd a Chynaliadwyedd
Environment and Sustainability Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA.

20 September 2011.

Dear Lord Elis-Thomas,

RE. NANT Y MOCH WIND FARM DEVELOPMENT

I am a professional engineer. Although I now live in Derbyshire, I was brought up in Aberystwyth and went to school at Ardwyn. I went on to study mechanical engineering at Swansea University. I know Nant y Moch and Pumlumon as well as anyone.


My testimony is brief: from an engineering point of view wind power is ineffective because a “spinning reserve” of back-up from conventional sources of generation is required at all times to cater for calm periods. Such duplication is wasteful – the antithesis of sustainability.

As regards security of supply, it is worth pointing out that Great Britain has huge reserves of coal that should be exploited. We did have world-class expertise in clean coal technology and a re-emphasis of research into this vital resource should now be paramount. Coal technology is eminently exportable, unlike the importation of wind generation technology. Which is better for our economy? We should be selling to the world’s emerging economies not buying from the most developed!

However the most telling point is this: the UK produces a dwindling 2% of the global emission of carbon dioxide and other noxious gases. If all electricity production, road, rail, air transport and all industry were magically to be stopped, the effect on the world’s CO2 emissions would therefore be negligible and do nothing significant to counter global warming.

Any contributions that Wales can make by widespread application of wind power will be too small to measure. How is that permanent disfigurement of a finite natural resource (the landscape) can be regarded as a sustainable policy? Land necessary for wind power is measured by area and there is insufficient. Coal, oil and gas reserves are measured by volume with huge specific energy densities – and largely underground. They also yield other valuable commodities.

Yours faithfully,


T. Martin Jones.