

BACKING FOR FARM WIND TURBINES

An appeal against a refusal to grant planning permission to erect two 330kw wind turbines on farms near Boncath has been supported by Pembrokeshire Friends of the Earth [1]. The group has written to the Planning Inspectorate urging it to overturn the rejection by Pembrokeshire County Council planners of an application by a small Welsh-based company, Seren Energy [2].

A spokesperson for the group said:

“We are urging the Planning Inspectorate to allow this application for two wind turbines to go ahead.

“Wind energy is one of the cleanest forms of energy available and has an important role to play in a world that is threatened by climate change, insecure energy supplies and rising fuel prices. It is also making a significant contribution to the rapidly growing green economy, creating jobs and supporting businesses.

“At a local level, wind energy can provide an important source of revenue for family farms and the wider rural community.”

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For further information please contact Gordon James on 01437 563670 or 07579964256

NOTES

1. <http://www.pcs.planningportal.gov.uk/pcsportal/ViewCase.asp?caseid=2166412&coid=2165764>

2. A copy of the letter to the Planning Inspectorate below

January 26th 2012

Susan Bayliss
The Planning Inspectorate

Dear Susan,

Re: Planning Appeal Ref. No. APP/N6845/A/11/2166412

Pembrokeshire Friends of the Earth supports the appeal by Seren Energy Ltd to erect two 330kw wind turbines and associated structures at Dolau Newydd, Blaeffos, Boncath, Pembrokeshire.

Wind energy is one of the cleanest, safest and most cost-effective forms of energy available. The fuel is free and will never run out, and there are no waste products or pollution produced directly by its operation. It is technically the most advanced of the renewable energy options and can deliver much-needed cuts in greenhouse gas emissions now. In a world that is increasingly threatened by climate change, peak oil, insecure energy supplies and rising fossil fuel prices, wind energy has much to offer.

Wind energy is one of the fastest growing sources of energy globally, second only to solar power, because it is effective at reducing emissions of climate-changing gases. It also makes an important economic contribution and, according to the Global Wind Energy Council over 400,000 people are now employed in this industry. At a local level, wind energy can provide a very important source of revenue for family farms.

Numerous studies that assess the impacts of climate change and mitigation measures, such as those by the Inter Governmental Panel on Climate Change, the UK Committee on Climate Change and the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research at Manchester University, envisage a significant role for wind energy. Similarly, a study by Stanford University, which assessed alternative energy sources to fossil fuels, found that wind energy was by far the most promising in terms of climate change, human health, energy security, water supply, space requirements, wildlife, water pollution, reliability and sustainability. <http://news-service.stanford.edu/news/2009/january7/power-010709.html> .

Recently, the influential International Energy Agency (IEA), in its World Energy Outlook 2011, stated that “we cannot afford to delay further action to tackle climate change if the long term target of limiting the global average temperature increase to 2° C is to be achieved at a reasonable cost”. It warned that, even if world governments implemented planned policies, we are likely to see a temperature rise of 3.5° C by the end of the century. It warns of our ongoing dependence on fossil fuels and the need to switch to renewable forms of energy, such as wind. <http://www.iea.org/weo/>

Despite the clear benefits of wind energy, particularly its significance in mitigating the impacts of climate change, planning applications for wind farms often trigger strong opposition from a vocal minority. A briefing paper produced by Friends of the Earth Cymru – ‘Wind Power: 20 Myths Blown Away’ – demonstrates that there is generally little substance to the arguments used against wind energy. It cites evidence, for instance, that opinion polls consistently show significant support for wind energy even amongst people who live close to wind farms. This paper can be found at: http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/wind_myths.pdf

Wind energy also has an important role to play in meeting renewable energy targets that have been set in Wales, the UK and the EU. The EU's Renewable Energy Directive gives an indication of how challenging these have to be if they are to have a meaningful impact in reducing climate-changing emissions. Under this Directive, the UK will have to generate 15% of all its energy – electricity, heat and transport fuels – from renewable sources by 2020. It's estimated that electricity generation from renewable sources will have to increase from 5% to 35% as its contribution to this overall target.

The two wind turbines at this location near Boncath would contribute towards the Welsh Assembly Government's admirable aim of generating 800MW of electricity from onshore wind farms as part of its Technical Advice Note 8 planning policy. Wales is currently well short of meeting this target.

Although landscape considerations are often put forward as a reason for objecting to wind farm applications, in this instance we believe that the environmental and economic benefits of these two turbines would outweigh landscape impacts.

We hope you will take these points into consideration when you assess this appeal.

Yours sincerely

Gordon James
Campaigner
Pembrokeshire Friends of the Earth