

20 January 2011

RENEWABLE ENERGY TARGETS TO BE FOCUS OF COMMITTEE INQUIRY

The achievability of the Scottish Government's renewable energy targets is to be examined by the Scottish Parliament's Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee, which announced a call for evidence today.

The technological, infrastructure and financial challenges of meeting the targets contained in the Scottish Government's 2020 Routemap for Renewable Energy will be discussed by the committee in a series of evidence sessions. During the course of these sessions, the committee will explore the merits of the targets, as well as the risks and barriers to these targets being realised.

Committee Convener Murdo Fraser MSP said:

"This inquiry will take a hard and realistic look at whether the Scottish Government's targets are achievable. While Scotland's renewable energy resources are not in question, recent news on planning decisions and various reports casting doubt on issues of skills and investment mean that we need to take stock.

"In addition to this controversy, a vigorous, polarised public debate continues on the merits of certain renewable technologies, and on the siting of developments such as wind farms and biomass plants.

"Given the strong feelings involved, we anticipate and welcome a high level of interest in the inquiry. We aim to hear from as broad a range of contributors as possible and will seek reassurance that issues of cost, skills and planning can be overcome."

Key questions to be considered during the inquiry will include:

- Is the technology to meet the targets available and affordable?
- Are our universities and research institutes fully geared up to the need for technological development?

- How can national priorities be reconciled with local interests?
- Are we confident that the necessary infrastructure can be developed and financed so that Scotland can export any excess electricity generation to the rest of the UK?
- What will the impact be on consumers' bills?
- Will sufficient funds be available to allow investment in both the installation and development of relevant technologies?
- Will Scotland have sufficient home-grown skills to attract inward investment?
- Are the reforms of the energy markets and subsidy regimes at both UK and EU level sufficient to meet the challenge of the Scottish Government's renewable targets?

Background

The Committee held a round table discussion on 7 December 2011 to explore the scope of the inquiry. Full details can be found at:

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28862.aspx?r=6615&mode=pdf>

The closing date for submissions is 29 February 2012.

Responses should be sent, wherever possible, electronically and in MS Word format to renewablesinquiry@scottish.parliament.uk

Hard copy responses may be sent to:

Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee
TG.01
Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh EH99 1SP

On Thursday 19 January, the Scottish Government announced planning consent for the Anglo-Scottish interconnector that will allow new renewables developments to be connected to the grid. This is something the inquiry will specifically examine.

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