



Nuclear Free Local Authorities Steering Committee

information

NFLA Media release - for immediate release, 10th July 2012

DECC survey shows strong support for renewable energy and split support for new nuclear build – why not publicise it more widely?

The Nuclear Free Local Authorities (NFLA) publicises one of the largest surveys of public opinion on energy policy carried out by the UK Government which provides the strongest evidence yet of high public support for renewable energy and more limited support for nuclear power (1).

The independent survey conducted for the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) asked in detail 2,121 people their views on climate change, energy sources and their key concerns over future energy use.

Key points of the survey include:

- 82 per cent support plans to “pursue a mix of energy sources to ensure a reliable supply of electricity in the UK”.
- Nearly 8 out of 10 strongly support renewable energy compared to just 5% who oppose them.
- 69 per cent agreed with the statement that “renewable energy industries and developments provide economic benefits to the UK”.
- 55 per cent agreed they would be happy to have a large-scale renewable energy development in their area. Just 29 per cent disagreed with such developments.
- 83 per cent supported the development of solar power, 76 per cent back offshore wind projects, 75 per cent support wave and tidal arrays, and 66 per cent support the development of onshore wind farms.
- However, just 29 per cent of respondents said they thought the benefits of nuclear energy outweighed the risks, while 30 per cent thought the contrary, and 32 per cent said the benefits and risks were evenly balanced.

The NFLA find it interesting how limited has been the media’s interest with this comprehensive survey (2), given the prominent coverage to a EDF sponsored poll which apparently suggested strong support for new nuclear build (3). This may be due to the fact that there has been no DECC media release on the survey! The DECC survey can also be compared to the Ipsos MORI poll for the West Cumbrian Managing Radioactive Waste Safely Partnership (4) which it was suggested showed majority support for developing a nuclear waste repository, even though 19% of poll respondents had never heard of the project and a further 61% had either ‘just heard of it’ or knew ‘just a little’ about it.

NFLA urge DECC to use the findings of this large public survey to counter the challenge of the Treasury and backbench MPs who are seeking to see savage cuts in financial support to renewable energy and to set a different, imaginative course in energy policy. The NFLA believe this survey shows strong support for its own energy vision – a wide renewable energy mix, and Council-led energy efficiency and decentralised microgeneration energy initiatives.

NFLA Chair Councillor Brian Goodall said:

“The DECC survey clearly shows that the UK public agree with what the NFLA have consistently argued for – the promotion of renewable energy, microgeneration and energy efficiency programmes to develop clean, sustainable energy. The public also fully understand the positive benefits this can have on job creation at the local level. I urge UK Energy Minister Ed Davey to show the political leadership to abandon the expensive option of new nuclear build and develop a renewable energy revolution. It is clear from the Minister's own survey that the people want it and would fully support it. Let's get on and develop it – Councils are only too happy to help.” (5)

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT VOICE ON NUCLEAR ISSUES



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Ends

Further information - Sean Morris, NFLA Secretary 0161 234 3244 or 07771 930186.

Notes to editors:

- (1) DECC Public Attitudes Tracker – Wave 1, Summary of Key Issues, 9th July 2012.
<http://www.decc.gov.uk/assets/decc/11/stats/5707-decc-public-att-track-surv-wave1-summary.pdf>
- (2) To date, the only specialist media outlet that appears to have profiled the DECC survey in any detail is Business Green, ‘Government survey reveals strong public support for renewables’, 9th July 2012.
<http://www.businessgreen.com/bg/news/2190060/government-survey-reveals-strong-public-support-renewables>
- (3) EDF energy press release, ‘Support for nuclear energy bounces back after Fukushima while opposition to new plants falls to five-year low – YouGov poll reveals’, 4th July 2012.
<http://www.edfenergy.com/media-centre/press-news/support-for-nuclear-energy-bounces-back.shtml>
- (4) CORE (Cumbrians Opposed to a Radioactive Environment) press release, ‘West Cumbria MRWS Partnership warned about validity of Ipsos-MORI poll, 23rd May 2012.
<http://www.corecumbria.co.uk> (download from the ‘Press releases’ section of website).
- (5) In his speech to the Annual Conference of the Local Government Association the UK Energy Minister Ed Davey called on Local Authorities to take a leading role in developing energy policy at the local level. The NFLA strongly supports such a call and has developed Policy Briefings on how Local Authorities can ‘Lead a Renewable Energy Revolution’ in England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales. These reports are being currently updated and will be published later this summer.
Ed Davey speech to the LGA Conference -
http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/news/edd_ldaspch/edd_ldaspch.aspx
NFLA briefings on energy policy in England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales –
http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/docs/briefings/NFLA_Policy_Briefing_86_England_and_renewable_energy.pdf
[http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/docs/briefings/A201_\(NB87\)_Ireland_and_renewable_energy.pdf](http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/docs/briefings/A201_(NB87)_Ireland_and_renewable_energy.pdf)
http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/docs/briefings/NFLA_Policy_Briefing_89_Scottish_energy_update.pdf
http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/docs/briefings/NFLA_PB_90_Welsh_energy_report.pdf

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