



Nuclear Free Local Authorities Steering Committee

information

For immediate release

There is a consensus on nuclear power in Scotland – and it is overwhelmingly against it

Nuclear Free Local Authorities (NFLA) Scotland have noted with interest the concerted attempts to accuse the Scottish Government of being negligent in its policy of opposing nuclear power and promoting a huge increase in renewable energy.

Last week the Secretary of State for Scotland, Jim Murphy, attacked the Scottish Government at a conference of nuclear spin doctors organised by the European Nuclear Society in Edinburgh (1).

NFLA Scotland agrees with the need for a balanced energy mix, but does not see nuclear as a part of that mix. The latest Scottish Energy Trends (2) paper notes renewable energy accounts for 20% of Scottish gross consumption in 2007 (up from 16.9% in 2006) while nuclear energy reduced to 13% due to unplanned outages. This is higher use of renewable energy than anywhere else in the UK or Ireland and is predicted to continue to rise to 31% by 2011.

Indeed, on the day of Minister Murphy's speech in Edinburgh last week it was announced that 10 offshore wind power sites were to be built in Scotland. At peak output they will produce three times the capacity of Scotland's nuclear stations, enough to meet all of Scotland's electricity demand (3).

NFLA Scotland believe an energy mix of renewable power sources coupled with a concerted effort to promote energy efficiency projects will be more than enough to ensure Scotland's future energy use is secure while ensuring the country is a beacon of what can be done sustainably to combat climate change. NFLA Scotland Member Councils have led the way in promoting energy efficiency, such as the development ground-breaking 'eco-houses' in Dundee and Glasgow.

Former First Minister Jack McConnell set the policy that Scotland should not develop new nuclear until a long-term solution to radioactive waste was found. Such a solution has not yet been found and is still decades away from being found. A wide cross-party consensus exists in Scotland promoting renewables and energy efficiency – this is the future for Scotland and the Scottish Government should be allowed to promote this policy without hindrance from Whitehall. Nuclear power also has a safety case to answer, and may take many years to develop to provide the levels of energy that are required – time that is not there with the immediacy of the climate change problem.

NFLA Scotland Convenor, Councillor Euan McLeod said:

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“The cacophony of noise coming from the nuclear lobby here in Scotland has been deafening. But Scotland has made its choice, and it is not for nuclear. Scottish NFLA Councils are leading the way in promoting this nuclear free policy and are beacons of best practice in developing energy efficiency in housing and public buildings across the country.

Renewables are on the increase in Scotland and nuclear has had its day. Nuclear power is a red herring in the debate in Scotland – why replicate the mistakes of the past? By promoting renewable energy Scotland can show Europe and the wider world the most effective way in dealing with climate change. In this case, Westminster has got it wrong.”

NFLA Scotland is holding their Annual General Meeting in Dundee City Chambers on the morning of Friday 27th February.

Ends

Further information:

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- (1) Quoted in The Herald, 16th February 2009
- (2) Energy Trends quoted in www.informedscotland.co.uk Edition 2, December 2008
- (3) Quoted in The Scotsman, 18th February 2009 and the NFLA Scotland Policy Adviser's report, available on request from the NFLA Secretary

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