

NFLA LETTERS TO THE NEWSPAPERS, December 2009

Letter to The Guardian, 22nd December 2009

Councils should think local and act global

Dear Sir,

I would like to wholeheartedly agree with the sentiments made by Duncan Kerr of 'A Climate 4 Change' that local authorities are playing a major role in developing progressive policies of climate change mitigation (Letters - Think local, act global, Guardian, 22nd December).

The Conference of elected mayors and leaders of Councils at Copenhagen showed that around the world Councils are trying to take a positive leadership role in promoting policies in energy efficiency, promoting renewable energy and decarbonising their communities in practical, sensible ways. The general failure of the Copenhagen conference must not end with depression and inaction, and I urge Councils, the Government and the devolved assemblies to encourage the very positive measures that are taking place across the UK to continue. We can never lecture anyone else unless we put our own house in order.

The Nuclear Free Local Authorities though warn against seeing nuclear power as one of the world's answers to climate change mitigation. Councils should rather educate their communities on the benefits of reducing energy consumption, whilst actively promoting all forms of renewable energy. Cities around the world are doing this - I say the more the better for showing our national governments the real way out of the relative failure of the Copenhagen Summit.

Yours sincerely,
Baillie George Regan
Chair of UK and Ireland Nuclear Free Local Authorities
c/o NFLA Secretariat, Manchester Town Hall

Letter to The Daily Telegraph, 17th December 2009

Denmark leads the way, why doesn't the UK follow?

I read with interest Geoffrey Lean's excellent article on Denmark's renewable energy revolution (Wanted - dark and stormy nights, Daily Telegraph).

As we watch the Climate Change Summit in Denmark's capital, Copenhagen, flounder and possibly fail, your article showed what can be achieved with ambition, imagination and political will. Denmark invested heavily in wind and other renewable energy over the last 2 decades, at a time when the UK had an early technological edge in such industries. It's strong, focussed support has seen wind power boom to 20% of total electricity generation today, and that should grow to 50% by 2020. The possibility of having 100% renewable energy is also completely possible by 2030.

Why doesn't the UK try and match such ambitious targets? Denmark's decision to not pursue nuclear power in the 1980s but to go for wind power is also reaping huge economic benefits as its manufacturers lead the way in developing turbines around the world. It is a

clear and obvious alternative as the UK Government rushes head-first for the nuclear option instead. Denmark's innovative link up with Norway could easily be replicated in the UK with England, Scotland, Wales and even Ireland sharing power with each other. We urge Mr Miliband to stop a couple of extra days after the Copenhagen summit to look at the Danish option and really push for renewable energy, not nuclear!

Yours sincerely,
Baillie George Regan
Chair of UK and Ireland Nuclear Free Local Authorities
c/o NFLA Secretariat, Manchester Town Hall

Letters to The Whitehaven News, 11th December 2009

Sellafield fine shows the real folly of new nuclear build

Your article noting the £75,000 fine of the Sellafield site operator is a real warning to the public of the dangers of building a new nuclear reactor programme (Sellafield fined as workers exposed to highly toxic radiation, Whitehaven News, 9th December).

Two external contractors were given significant radiation doses amongst a litany of safety errors identified by the Health and Safety Executive. This is not the first time of safety breaches either, and across the UK nuclear industry safety lapses and problems dealing with aging reactors are regularly reported. Why are we now seeking to pump billions of money into renewing an industry with such a safety record? When do we ever hear of a major safety lapse at a wind farm or a hydro-electric plant? The inherent dangers of radiation always mean such safety breaches create real concern to the public, and the Nuclear Free Local Authorities share that concern.

Perhaps your readers would also like to know further the results of a major German government 'KIKK' study that has recorded childhood cancers 2.2 times more likely within 5 kms of a nuclear site than the general population. Yet the UK committee considering this study will report AFTER the new build consultation, thus not being adequately considered as an issue for a new nuclear build programme.

I hope the health of the two workers concerned is not adversely affected by the radiation release. But it is an example of the real folly of new nuclear build.

Yours sincerely,
Baillie George Regan
Chair, UK and Ireland Nuclear Free Local Authorities
c/o NFLA Secretariat, Town Hall, Manchester

Letter to The Scotsman, 09th December 2009

Scotland doesn't need nuclear - we are a leader in renewables

I was pleased to read the article in today's Scotsman that Scotland will be able to meet its future renewable energy targets three times over (Plans in place to meet our green energy targets three times over, The Scotsman, 9th December).

The report by Scottish Natural Heritage that planned wind, hydro-electric and marine renewable power projects will produce as much as 26,073 megawatts of electricity by

2050, is a clear example that Scotland can successfully seek to meet its electricity and energy needs without recourse to developing new nuclear power stations. It is also an example to England and Wales that the renewable option is a viable, effective and successful way in guaranteeing national energy security whilst developing a low-carbon economy.

The Scottish Government though needs to do more positive work in this area. It should put additional resources into energy conservation and assist Councils in dealing with the major problems created by fuel poverty then Scotland. Much still needs to be done over the next 4 decades, but a policy of sensible projects for renewable energy, coupled with energy conservation and energy efficiency projects creates the sustainable future that the Nuclear Free Local Authorities urge. It would also put Scotland forward as an example of best practice to the world as it discusses such matters in Copenhagen.

Yours sincerely,

Councillor Euan McLeod

Convenor, Nuclear Free Local Authorities Scotland