

Date: Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> January 2005

## **Our Energy Future – the Role of Wind Power**

### **Yvette Cooper, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the ODPM launches parliamentary guide to wind farm development**

SERA<sup>1</sup>, the Labour affiliated environmental think tank, has today, Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> January, published a definitive wind power guide for MPs and Councillors. The guide, produced in association with npower renewables<sup>2</sup> and the British Wind Energy Association (BWEA)<sup>3</sup> outlines the role of wind power in meeting the Government's renewable energy targets in the short to medium term.

The briefing document assesses the issues surrounding the development of wind energy and reviews some of the myths and facts about wind power, currently the most advanced of the current renewable energy technologies. It also outlines the challenges that the Government and industry must overcome to ensure that wind energy fulfils its potential in the UK, including a move towards more consistent planning policies and decisions. Difficulties with planning remains the biggest barrier to the development of and investment in renewables.

Yvette Cooper MP, will deliver the keynote speech at the launch event to be held at the House of Commons today. The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) will outline Government policies aimed at overcoming unnecessary planning application delays and improving the efficiency of the planning system in relation to wind farm development in particular.

Marcus Rand, CEO of BWEA said, “The future looks bright for wind energy in the UK and 2005 will be a record year with more projects than ever before being commissioned. However, we need to maintain the momentum achieved over the past few years. This initiative by SERA will help ensure decision-makers are able to get to grips with the real facts about wind energy. Wind power is an essential way for the UK to take action on reducing our carbon emissions and bring economic and social benefits for the UK too.”

Kevin McCullough, director of npower renewables, added that, “As the UK’s leading wind farm developer we hope that this briefing will assist MPs to address any concerns of their constituents. It has never been more important to have a widespread understanding of the need for wind power, the benefits it can bring and the potential for appropriate development.”

The recent publication of the UK’s review of the Climate Change Programme suggested that the Government would find it difficult to meet the 2020 target without a significant expansion of the renewable sector and a far greater uplift in energy efficiency initiatives.

With this in mind, the UK Government has established the Renewables Obligation, through which electricity supply companies are required to source a percentage of their electricity sales (increasing each year) from eligible renewable sources.

The existing national policy mechanisms, renewable energy targets and the recent public declaration from Tony Blair<sup>4</sup> emphasising the need for UK leadership on climate change at the G8, indicate the importance of such an information source at this time.

**ENDS**

Please note the launch reception is by invitation only. Please find attached a copy of the briefing document: "Our Energy Future – The Role of Wind Power". Contact SERA for any further information on 020 7263 7389 or email [enquiries@sera.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@sera.org.uk)

**Notes to Editor:**

- 1 **SERA** – the Socialist Environment and Resources Association – is an independent environment group affiliated to the Labour Party. SERA works to integrate green thinking into Labour Party policies and believes that social and environmental concerns must be addressed together.
- 2 **npower renewables** is a leading UK renewable energy generator, committed to developing and operating wind farms, biomass co-firing and hydro plant that produce sustainable and environmentally-friendly electricity. The company operates 15 wind farms in the UK, including North Hoyle Offshore Wind Farm, the first major offshore wind farm to be built in UK waters. In addition to the 267MW of installed wind energy generation that it currently operates, npower renewables also operates some 55MW of hydroelectric power.  
  
npower renewables is a specialist subsidiary of RWE Npower plc, one of the UK's leading integrated energy companies. [www.npower-renewables.com](http://www.npower-renewables.com)
- 3 **BWEA** is the UK's largest renewable energy association with over 345 companies members active in the sector in membership. Formed 26 years ago, BWEA is at the forefront of the development of the UK wind industry, representing the sector to Government, business, media and the public. Wind energy is poised on the brink of a major expansion in the UK, and will be the greatest single contributor to the Government's 10% renewable energy target with some £7bn of investment expected by 2010. See [www.bwea.com](http://www.bwea.com).
- 4 "...the G8, again, needs to lead: not just because we currently account for 47% of global CO2 emissions, but also because it is our scientists, our industries and our economies that must help solve this problem." Tony Blair, excerpt taken from interview with the Economist, Dec 29<sup>th</sup> 2004.