

Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee Inquiry into the Scottish Government's Renewable Energy Targets

Response by Caithness Windfarm Information Forum

Introduction

Caithness Windfarm Information Forum (CWIF) is run by a group of people concerned about the proliferation of windfarms in Scotland, particularly the Highlands and more particularly Caithness and Sutherland. CWIF maintains a very active website which is accessed by people from all over the world seeking information and links to information sources. The website hosts probably the world's most complete publicly available record of windfarm related accident statistics.

CWIF commends the responses to the inquiry by its associated organisations Communities Against Turbines Scotland (CATS) and Stop Highland Windfarms Campaign (SHWC), and indeed the many thoughtful and informed responses which have been lodged to date.

CWIF would draw the attention of the Inquiry to the many stereotype responses in support of renewable energy, typically 62 to 64 KB in size. As this is an Inquiry, these should not influence the Committee's deliberations as it is clear that they represent one single opinion which has been choreographed using multiple respondents who do not have a valid point of their own to make.

It does however highlight a problem which the Scottish Government fosters. It is commonplace to find that a windfarm proposal is reported as having high numbers of letters of both support and opposition, and only the numbers are taken into account. Examination of the **quality** and **origin** and indeed **the method of collection** of these letters of support invariably reveal a concerted effort to simply increase numbers, the content and quality of which is wilfully not scrutinised by Scottish Government nor by determining Local Authorities.

CWIF urges the Committee to examine the expressions of support and opposition to the recently consented Dorenell Windfarm to see the problem at first hand. It should be noted that neither the writer of this submission nor corporate CWIF have any first hand knowledge of the quality and content of the representations at Dorenell, only that CWIF knows by experience that when there are large numbers of letters of support, they have been contrived.

Although outwith the remit of the Inquiry, CWIF urges the Committee to recommend to the Scottish Government that the **quality, origin and method of collection of representations** both for and against windfarm development are weighted appropriately when planning applications are considered.

Caithness Windfarm Information Forum
29th February 2012