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“North Wales Deserves Better - A response”

Re. Written Statement - Up-date on the Nuclear Sector in Wales – Ken Skates 23/10/2020

It is difficult to comprehend why the Welsh Government is clinging to the hopes that a nuclear revival will solve regeneration issues in North Wales. There is now clear evidence that nuclear power is : yesterday’s technology, costs the earth, leaves a legacy of highly radioactive waste and is no answer to climate change ... It is too little too late.

1. Wylfa Newydd – The Written Statement claims Wylfa Newydd could significantly contribute towards the 2050 zero CO2 emissions target. BUT

Climate change is now and is the most important issue facing us today. We need to invest in low carbon renewable technologies NOW – we cannot afford to wait

The latest research claims we have less than 12 years to act on climate change before it becomes seriously problematic. Currently Wales generates no electricity from nuclear and the most optimistic scenario for new nuclear generation at Wylfa Newydd is now looking like 2030 at the earliest. If Wylfa Newydd goes ahead it will create a massive extra legacy of radioactive waste that future generations will have to manage long after the stations have been shut-down .

Wylfa Newydd is a costly distraction that is neither low carbon, renewable or needed and requires enormous government subsidies. The estimated cost of the new build when Hitachi was around was running between 15 and 20billion.

The Zero Carbon Britain Project demonstrates how we can rapidly reduce UK Greenhouse gas emissions to zero by 2030 using only currently available technology. It outlines how we can provide a reliable energy supply with 100% renewable energy sources and flexible carbon neutral back up - without fossil fuels, nuclear power, or gambling on future technology. In addition it can deliver a modern lifestyle, create employment, improve our wellbeing, and ensure a safe and sustainable future for future generations www.zerocarbonbritain.org

2. Trawsfynydd a new development company called Cwmni Eginio - The Written Statement claims this will help exploit the huge economic benefits of small modular reactors (SMR’s) and associated technologies. BUT

It’s the same old technology. The basic idea dates back to the 1940s, when the US. Air Force, Army, and Navy each initiated R&D on various types of small reactors. They still have the same problems facing large reactors eg soaring costs, safety, and radioactive waste.

Are SMR’s safer and more secure than conventional nuclear power stations? –Well that depends on how many modules are built on the same site with the added complications and costs of a variety of new forms of nuclear waste on a number of different sites.

SMR’s, like conventional nuclear reactors use uranium , one of the most toxic pollutants of all times. Uranium is a finite resource that has to be imported. It is key to the nuclear fuel cycle which is a filthy, dangerous and unhealthy process leaving a legacy of radioactive wastes at all stages; from fuel production to decommissioning.

The SMR 'dream' is to gain sufficient orders to set-up factory production lines which then create their own problems; eg quality control, health and safety, procedures for recalls etc : To date, worldwide there are insufficient orders to proceed with a factory.

Cheaper does not necessarily mean cost-effective. In Dec 2017 The Atkins Consultancy report for BEIS found that power from SMRs would cost nearly one-third more than conventional nuclear stations because of reduced economies of scale and the costs of deploying first-of-a-kind technology

It's the last ditch stand of a dying industry. You need more SMR's to produce the same amount of energy so that raises issues of safety, quality, licencing, security and evacuation plans.

Efficiency and most renewable technologies are already cheaper than new large reactors. The time it will take to certify SMRs will do little or nothing to help with the global warming problem and will actually complicate current efforts underway.

3. Existing expertise and skills in North Wales,

Substantial skills and expertise in the nuclear field exist in North Wales and there is plenty of scope for them to be fully utilised in the major challenges faced with decommissioning at both the Trawsfynydd and Wylfa nuclear sites. There is also the continuing problem of radioactive legacy waste management and the problems that exist for future generations.

Wales provides substantial opportunities to 'lead the way' in developing existing, emerging and new renewable energy projects based on truly sustainable principles .

The Institute of Welsh Affairs Report " The Economic Costs and Benefits of Renewable Energy Transition in Wales " shows that the development of an energy system that can enable Wales to become 100% self-sufficient in renewable electricity by 2035, requires around £25bn of investment in renewable electricity generation, and £5bn in domestic energy efficiency interventions. This analysis also shows that some 40% of renewable electricity spending could potentially be captured by Wales, along with 70% of domestic energy efficiency spending. In addition these investments could support some 20,150 jobs annually across Wales during the investment period . AND there is no need for nuclear power

<https://www.iwa.wales/click/2018/11/the-time-is-now-tick-tock-its-ticking-away/>

So why is there so much interest in new nuclear build? It makes no sense from any perspective.