

Gweinidog dros yr Amgylchedd, Cynllunio a Chefn Gwlad
Minister for Environment, Planning and Countryside



Your ref:
Our ref: CJ/00887/05

Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

DAVID BELLAMY
E Mail

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6 July 2005

Dear *Dr. Bellamy*

Thank you for your email dated 16th June 2005 in which you have expressed your concerns about the construction of wind farms in Wales.

It is a common misconception that wind turbines only operate for 20-25% of the time; this figure, often quoted, is the capacity factor, which is the average power output as a proportion of the output that would be achieved if the turbine were to operate at its full power rating for 100% of the time. In actuality, in the UK wind environment, an onshore wind turbine will produce useful energy for 70-85% of the year.

Wind energy is the most tried-and-tested, cost effective renewable energy source available. The cost of generating electricity from the wind has dropped considerably in recent years, and is expected to fall even further in the next decade. With the rising price and the associated environmental cost of burning fossil fuels, wind farms are proving an attractive option for generating energy. Combined with a reduction in energy consumption through energy efficiency measures, wind farms will help to provide Wales with a cleaner energy future.

Evidence does not show that wind farms harm tourism. In fact, many people regard wind turbines as elegant, visually pleasing structures. A large amount of research has been carried out into public attitudes towards wind farms, with many reports showing that an average of 80% of people support the development of wind power.

The Assembly Government does not consider that the value of the Welsh landscape has been disregarded in the development of national planning policy on renewable energy. We have given lengthy consideration to all the options for delivering our energy targets. We have also carefully considered the issues raised by the consultation process. However, the process has revealed that it is difficult to achieve consensus on



the matter of on shore wind and the final policy when issued will not meet every aspiration. I would hope however, that all that have engaged with us in the process feel that they have had their views thoroughly considered.

The final versions of Technical Advice Note 8 and the Ministerial Interim Planning Policy Statement are due to be issued shortly, detailing the Assembly Government's commitment to the development of all forms of renewable energy, energy efficiency and conservation measures. It will then be for local authorities to take on board national guidance and to devise appropriate local policies in development plans and supplementary guidance for considering wind farm proposals and determining applications for wind farms.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carwyn Jones', written in a cursive style.

Carwyn Jones AM