

PRESS RELEASE
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ASA SLASHES ESTIMATED CO2 SAVINGS FROM WIND

The Advertising Standards Authority will tomorrow (21.12.05) announce that following an investigation by its own Independent Reviewer, Sir John Caines, KCB, it has overturned an earlier ruling upholding the CO2 saving claimed by Renewable Energy Systems for a major onshore wind proposal in the Denbrook Valley, Devon, cutting the claimed savings by more than half.

This ruling affects windfarm projects all over the country, and for the first time gives clear guidance on CO2 savings from windpower are to be estimated.

The main issue hinged on whether wind-farm CO2 savings should be calculated on the assumption of displacement of coal, or more reasonably on the basis of a "grid average" displacement.

Based on the grid average method, a typical 2 MW (100 metre, 228ft, high) wind turbine in the UK would save just 2,000 tonnes of CO2 per year, which is 230kg per hour on average. This hourly rate is equivalent to the hourly emissions of just two Heavy Duty Vehicles (125 kg per hour at 100 kph, according to the Highways Authority).

The importance of this issue is therefore economic, since only a reasonable estimation of emissions savings allows a correct estimate of the cost of the saving. Randomly intermittent generators such as windpower produce savings which are very expensive relative to the alternatives, and offer no significant degree of reliable capacity. On the other hand "Firm" generating technologies such as tidal and biomass offer reliable capacity which can be planned into the system, a combination which offers better value to the consumer whose subsidy is supporting renewables.

Dr John Constable, Policy and Research Director of the Renewable Energy Foundation said: "It's good to see that the ASA has revisited this issue and brought its ruling into line with commonsense engineering principles. The wind industry as a whole must now revise its claims, claims which have seriously distorted debate about the value of onshore windpower."

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For further information please contact Margareta Stanley at DBA on 020 7930 8033 email info@nchl.demon.co.uk or visit the website at www.ref.org.uk.

Notes for Editors

1. Renewable Energy Systems Group (RES, part of Sir Robert McAlpine Group) is proposing to construct nine turbines of 120 metres (400 feet) in the vulnerable Denbrook Valley in Devon. For further information see RES's own site (www.den-brook.co.uk), and that of the local people protesting (<http://www.denbrook.co.uk/index.htm>).

2. RES, in common with most of the wind industry, and the trade lobby the British Wind Energy Association, claims that wind savings should be based on the assumption of coal displacement at 0.86 tonnes per MWh. However, due to many contingent factors actual displacement is radically uncertain, and it is therefore more reasonable to calculate the saving on the basis of a "grid average" emissions factor, which is currently 0.43 tonnes per MWh. It should be noted, however, that almost all experts agree that in the longer term (i.e most of a wind-farm's 25 year life) the likeliest displaced technology is in fact gas, which

emits between 0.3 and 0.4 tonnes per MWh.

3. RES originally made claims about emissions savings in a leaflet distributed in the Denbrook area earlier this year. A private individual in the area was aware of the Renewable Energy Foundation's criticisms of the wind industry's methodology for calculating CO2 savings and made a formal complaint to the ASA. The ASA initially issued a flawed judgment upholding RES's claims, but has now reversed the decision on reconsideration of the facts of the matter.