

**Response to Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (AERA)  
on the proposed Climate Change Bill.**

**Windwatch NI and West Tyrone against Wind Turbines**

**14 July 2021**

From the outset of the overarching project for so called renewable energy we have repeatedly demonstrated the legal requirement for an honest cost/benefit analysis.

We have informed local and regional tiers of governance on the lack of meaningful public consultation.

We have repeatedly informed various tiers of governance on the actual environmental, economic and health impacts, of the renewables project. No action was taken on any of them except for introducing legislation which benefits energy industry stake holders.

The above-mentioned failures have so far resulted in the following:

The RHI debacle.

Subsidy and compensations scandals to the benefit of wind turbine and anaerobic digester owners.

High and contested levels of fuel poverty.

The price of electricity now well started on an out-of-control spiral due to the cost of renewables.

No measured financial or environmental achievements.

The decline and emigration of manufacturing industries.

Grave public safety concerns.

This latest call for evidence is preceded by and founded on previous non-compliance, therefore also lacks compliance.

A recent study carried out by academics from the University of Exeter indicated an inappropriate influence on governance by stakeholders in the energy industry. We raised our concerns about this many years ago. For example, in our submissions to the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee (and follow-up) on the Inquiry into the Electricity Sector in Northern Ireland. This was obviously ignored albeit such an inquiry automatically indicates a problem.

In addition to all of this we now have a looming crisis in security of supply in the face of increased demand from data centres, also alluded to in our submissions many years ago and more recently to the call for evidence to Energy Strategy.

In line with the Aarhus Convention's requirement for the public to have an opportunity to participate when all options are open, the public should have a possibility to provide comments and to have due account taken of them. Failure of this compliance in the past must be addressed before any continuance towards what is effectively a legislative dictatorship without the appropriate and competent expertise.

If we want to fix climate change, we need honesty.

The format of this consultation, as so often in the past, is so structured as to assume acceptance of several underlying narratives. Since we believe these to be wholly or partly faulty, completing the questionnaire in its present form would be to give the false impression of acceptance of these erroneous assumptions.

Climate impacts are often vastly exaggerated, leaving us panicked. The complexity, uncertainty, and ambiguity of the existing knowledge about climate change is being kept away from the policy and public debate. The solutions that have been proposed are technologically and politically impracticable on a global scale.

Because climate news only reports the worst outcomes, most people think the damage reported as being due to climate change is settled science. Remember how we were repeatedly told 2020's Atlantic hurricane season was the worst ever? The reporting ignored that almost everywhere else, hurricane intensity was feeble, making 2020 one of the globally weakest in satellite history. And even within the Atlantic, 2020 ranked thirteenth.

Lessons are not being learned from the unintended consequences of earlier climate policies. For example, European Union targets to boost biofuel use are likely to have led to the deforestation of an area roughly the size of the Netherlands over the last decade to expand soy, palm and other oil crops. That suggests efforts to replace polluting fuels such as diesel with biofuels are paradoxically increasing carbon dioxide emissions.

Further, too often news stories and research focus only on the negative climate change impacts and do not give a balanced perspective on the full research findings.

A recent instance of this was a landmark study in Nature Climate Change which made headlines around the world. Rising temperatures from global warming increase the number of heat deaths, now causing more than a third of heat deaths, or about 100,000 deaths per year.

Obviously, this is a powerful narrative to justify urgent climate policies.

But the study left out glaring truths that even its own authors have abundantly documented. Heat deaths are declining in countries with good data, likely because of ever more air conditioning. This is abundantly clear for the United States, which has seen increasing hot days since 1960 affecting a much greater population. Yet, the number of heat deaths has more than halved. So, while global warming could result in more heat deaths, technological development in, for instance, America, is actually resulting in fewer heat deaths.

More importantly, and particularly relevant to Northern Ireland, cold deaths vastly outweigh heat deaths worldwide. This is not just true for cold countries like Canada but also warmer countries like the United States, Spain and Brazil. Even in India, cold deaths outweigh heat deaths by 7-to-1. Globally, about 1.7 million deaths are caused by cold a year, more than five times the number of heat deaths.

This is important because rising temperatures from global warming will reduce the number of cold deaths. Yet, the Nature Climate Change study scrupulously decided to only look at heat deaths by limiting its research to the four warmest months, ignoring the number of cold deaths, which were five times higher.

In The Lancet, some of the same authors estimated recent changes in full-year heat and cold deaths from the 1990s to the 2010s. Reliably, they found that heat deaths increased, but cold deaths decreased even more for all regions and, on average, twice as much. This

suggests that leaving out cold deaths reverses the central message and distorts any policy formulation.

Whether or not warming is 'dangerous', is an issue of values, about which science has nothing to say. According to the IPCC, there is not yet evidence of changes in the global frequency or intensity of hurricanes, droughts, floods or wildfires. In the U.S., the states with by far the largest population growth are Florida and Texas, which are warm, southern states. Property along the coast is soaring in value. Personal preference and market value do not yet regard global warming as 'dangerous.'

Climate change is a grand narrative in which manmade climate change has become the dominant cause of societal problems. Everything that goes wrong reinforces the conviction that there is only one thing we can do to prevent those problems – stop burning fossil fuels. This grand narrative misleads us to think that if we solve the problem of manmade climate change, then these other problems would also be solved. This belief leads us away from a deeper investigation of the true causes of these problems. The end result is narrowing of the viewpoints and policy options that we are willing to consider in dealing with complex issues such as public health, water resources, weather disasters and national security.

We need secure, reliable, and economic energy systems for Northern Ireland. We need a 21st century infrastructure for our electricity and transportation systems, to support continued and growing prosperity. The urgency of rushing to implement 20th century renewable technologies risks wasting resources in creating an inadequate energy infrastructure and increasing our vulnerability to weather and climate extremes.

It is entirely counterproductive to sacrifice economic prosperity and overall societal resilience on the altar of urgently transitioning to 20th century renewable energy technologies, many of which are ineffective in addressing the underlying issues.

We need to remind ourselves that addressing climate change isn't an end in itself, and that climate change is not the only problem that Northern Ireland is facing. The objective should be to improve human well-being in the 21st century, while protecting the environment as much as we can.

The contradiction between the pessimistic analyses of the costs of the Net-Zero policy adopted by the Western world and the optimistic belief of its governments that its overall impact will be positive all round can be reduced to one question: Whether or not Net-Zero—as a solution to climate change—will in fact make life better or worse.

The solution of Net-Zero to an improperly identified problem simply isn't going to happen. Almost everywhere it has been offered to the voters, the voters have rejected it—most recently in a Swiss referendum that asked if they would pay higher taxes in order to meet Net-Zero targets. They voted no.

Such popular resistance is making itself felt before any serious sacrifice has actually been imposed on electorates. Until now, their pain has been purely rhetorical. How will they react when told that, in the words of Bjorn Lomborg of the Copenhagen Consensus, "By 2050, we will have to live with much lower energy consumption than today. Despite being richer, the average global person will be allowed less energy than today's average poor. We will all be allowed less energy than the average Albanian used in the 1980s. We will also have to accept shivering in winter and sweltering in summer, lower highway speeds and fewer people being allowed to fly."

They will understand that Net-Zero equals Poorer, Meaner, Slower, Dearer and they'll vote no.

On the basis of a highly topical comparison, "COVID is fixed with vaccines, not unending lockdowns. To tackle climate, we need to ramp up our investments in green energy innovation. Increasing green energy currently requires massive subsidies, but if we could innovate its future price down to below that of fossil fuels, everyone would switch."

We respectfully request your acknowledgement of this submission.

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