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Dear Dr Gibson

**Submission by the British Wind Energy Association to the consultation
Scotland's Renewable Potential – Beyond 2010.**

The British Wind Energy Association (BWEA) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the consultation and provides this submission on behalf of the UK wind energy industry.

BWEA was established in 1978 and is the representative body for companies active in the UK wind energy market. Its membership now includes 232 companies (<http://www.bwea.com/members/GenericList.asp>).

Wind energy is widely recognised as an abundant energy resource indigenous to the UK and Scotland in particular. Most commentators recognise that wind is likely to represent at least half of the UK Government's '10% by 2010' target. Beyond this baseline, continued growth is equally probable. In both instances, onshore wind in Scotland and offshore wind are likely to be the two largest components of this capacity.

In representing the wind industry, BWEA is therefore, in a unique position to comment on the circumstances under which this probability would become a certainty.

BWEA acknowledges the supportive environment that the Scottish Parliament and Executive have provided for renewables at large and wind energy, in particular. It has led to Scotland becoming the envy of other regions within the UK for its success in attracting economic benefit.



Although BWEA is primarily concerned with the wind energy sector, it is our firm belief that continued support and growth in wind energy will underpin the establishment and growth of other renewables, both directly and indirectly. For example, expanded grid availability build primarily for wind farms may benefit remote smaller-scale projects other marine technologies stand to have opportunities. Market comfort with wind energy may encourage investment in newer technologies.

Despite the enormous resources available, there remain, however, clear obstacles to the ability of Scotland to otherwise easily meet a 40% target.

The issues are not technical *per se*, but institutional, i.e. within the direct influence of the relevant political or regulatory bodies. It is the successful handling of these matters that will determine Scotland's renewable energy prospects. Two areas are of principal concern; 'Planning' and 'Connection'.

'Planning'

Although approval rates for Scottish projects are the best in the UK (93% approval of MW capacity submitted since January 1999) caution and foresight are required to consider the potential threats to the further development of wind energy. Recognition of the disproportionate influence and tactical approaches of the small yet very vocal anti-wind farm activist groups is necessary in order to ensure that such lobbying does not delay suitable project progress.

The planning profession needs to be equipped with clear information and strong criteria based planning policies for wind farms in order to identify unambiguous grounds for what is acceptable.

It should be noted that it is smaller schemes which have been approved, with the largest project being 49MW and the average 13.4MW. It is widely understood that larger schemes will be required to meet targets. Some are already in the planning process, but their early success will be critical in establishing the basis for further schemes. The configurations of projects (e.g. the extent to which smaller-scale wind farms may be considered important *vis a vis* larger on- and offshore projects) will also need to be reflected in guidance.

Tactical training areas are a major concern. Virtually all of southern Scotland is precluded from development if such blanket exclusion is allowed. There are further difficulties which need to be overcome in relation to radar. Much work is being undertaken in this area and the BWEA-DTI-MOD-CAA document is a helpful tool, but again, clear guidance and a pragmatic view in determinations will be necessary.

We seek support from the Executive to assist local authorities in implementing dedicated policies for renewable energy in their local plans.

Public familiarity is a key component in planning success. We commend the Executive to build on its own experience in encouraging communities to embrace the economic advantages and to play a full role in tackling misinformation.

'Connection'

The ability to connect projects is a fundamental need. The upgrading of the transmission system is rightly identified as a major barrier to large-scale development in Scotland. Connection will also require providing incentives for network operators to connect the range and diversity of projects that are likely to be proposed.

We advocate a nationally managed shallow-connection policy. Active management solutions will enable best use of resource.

It is our view that grid strengthening is both a UK-wide opportunity and also a UK-wide responsibility.

These issues need further extensive consultation within the renewables and transmission and distribution industries. We recommend that inclusive working groups are established to consider the interests of all affected parties.

In conclusion

Scotland has enviable renewable energy resources and its early achievements in developing these for the benefit of both Scotland and the UK will be further extended by continued attention to planning, connection and market issues.

BWEA is a member of the Scottish Renewables Forum and commends its position, particularly in considering the wider renewables agenda and a specifically Scottish orientation together with those of BWEA member companies, to you.

BWEA would be pleased to field further expert contribution on any aspect of our outline response.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N.G.', with a horizontal line underneath.

Nick Goodall
Chief Executive