

TO:

Chris Huhne, MP. Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change

Fergus Ewing, MSP. Minister for Energy, Enterprise and Tourism, Scottish Govt.

Neal Rafferty. Scottish Govt.

THE USE OF BIOLIQUIDS FOR ELECTRICITY GENERATION 23 January 2012

The purpose of this open letter, signed by leading UK environment and development organisations, is to respond to your departments' consultations on financial support levels for renewable electricity under the Renewable Obligation (RO). Specifically, this letter responds to the proposal that bioliquids should continue to be supported after April 2013.

While the consultation document proposes a cap on the amount of bioliquids that can be used for electricity generation this cap still allows support for significant amounts (up to 450,000 tonnes per year). Experience from German and Italian power stations for bioliquids indicates that this is likely to come from crops like palm oil and jatropha.

The negative consequences of using bioliquids are now well rehearsed. Bioliquid electricity will hinder rather than help efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; it will aggravate food insecurity in poorer countries; and it will increase the threats to global biodiversity.

The regulatory instrument meant to assure biofuel and bioliquid sustainability, the EU Renewable Energy Directive, is incomplete and does not reflect current scientific evidence on the greenhouse gas balances of biofuels. Furthermore, even the inadequate existing standards are unenforceable under current rules.

Many of the bioliquid power stations anticipated in the UK are likely to be new build according to Arup's June 2011 *'Review of renewable electricity technologies in the UK'*. Developers will expect a lifetime of at least 20 years to make an adequate economic return on their investment. The proposals in the RO consultation mean that financial support would be guaranteed for 25 years, so that the very damaging consequences of using bioliquids would continue for an extended period. Yet compared with other forms of renewable electricity, bioliquids give a very poor – if any - financial return measured by CO₂ saved per ROC.

Consequently, it seems very unwise to commit to consuming significant volumes of bioliquid vegetable oil for electricity generation over the next 25 years.

We therefore ask that there should be no support at all for bioliquid electricity in the Renewable Obligation from April 2013.

ActionAid UK

Biofuelwatch

Friends of the Earth, England, Wales & N. Ireland

Friends of the Earth, Scotland

Greenpeace

Sumatran Orangutan Society

War on Want

World Development Movement



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