

E-news update 28 July 2008

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## ENERGY

### 1.1. UK 'blocking' EU green energy plans

24 July 2008, The Press Association

Britain has been accused of trying to water down a European Union directive designed to give renewable energy sources such as wind, wave and solar power easier access to national electricity grids.

The UK has been pushing to amend a key passage in the directive, so that instead of saying EU member-states "shall" give priority access to renewables, it would say only that they "may" do so if they wish, The Guardian reported.

Luxembourg MEP Claude Turmes, architect of the renewables directive, accused Prime Minister Gordon Brown of backing green energy in public but behind the scenes blocking efforts to help it replace oil, coal and gas, which are blamed for global warming.

But the Department for Business rejected the allegation, insisting that Britain was already taking action to help renewable energy suppliers link up to the National Grid.

Launching last month's government renewables strategy, setting out on how the UK can meet its share of the EU's target of supplying 20% of energy from clean sources by 2020, Mr Brown said that barriers to grid access should be removed "without delay".

Supporters of the requirement to prioritise renewables say that it is necessary because a lack of connections to a network which was not designed to link up scattered and remote locations has stood in the way of wind farms delivering electricity to consumers. National Grid is under no legal obligation to connect renewable installations to the network.

In a recent report, the House of Commons Innovation, Universities, Science and Skills Committee voiced "frustration" at the existence of a backlog of wind power projects totalling 9.3 gigawatts which were waiting for connection to the Grid.

Discussing the British attempt to amend the EU directive, Mr Turmes said: "This would take us backwards and would weaken the possibilities of connecting renewable energy to the grid. A Government that says it wants to promote renewables cannot go for other policies behind the scenes."

But a Department for Business spokesman said: "Priority access for renewables is not necessary for us to meet our fair share of the renewables target. What renewables operators want is quicker access to the grid, not priority access. The UK is already taking significant steps to remove grid access barriers for renewables.

"It is, however, important that all forms of generation have faster access to the grid network to secure a balanced and secure energy supply. We are fully committed to meeting our fair share of the EU target, as demonstrated by our ambitious renewables strategy, published last month."

Link: <http://uk.news.yahoo.com/pressass/20080724/tuk-uk-blocking-eu-green-energy-plans-6323e80.html>

### 1.2. Al Gore's challenge to America: 100% carbon free energy within 10 years

23 July 2008, Lowcarboneconomy.com

Former US vice-president Al Gore has called upon Americans to abandon their dependence on fossil fuels.

The Nobel laureate and author of climate change warning book An Inconvenient Truth has urged the US to switch completely to renewable energy by 2018 in order to tackle climate change and alleviate economic crises.

Mr Gore claims that the aim is affordable and achievable, according to the BBC, and states that there is no sense in the US borrowing money from China in order to burn oil imported from the Middle East.

"The answer is to end our reliance on carbon-based fuels," he said in a speech in Washington.

"When you connect the dots, it turns out that the real solutions to the climate crisis are the very same measures needed to renew our economy and escape the trap of ever-rising energy prices."

An Inconvenient Truth was made into a documentary in order to highlight the threat of global warming and to encourage governments across the world to act by presenting scientific evidence and a vision of the consequences of climate change.

Link:

[http://www.lowcarboneconomy.com/community\\_content/low\\_carbon\\_news/1441/al\\_gore's\\_challenge\\_to\\_america\\_100\\_carbon\\_free\\_energy\\_within\\_10\\_years](http://www.lowcarboneconomy.com/community_content/low_carbon_news/1441/al_gore's_challenge_to_america_100_carbon_free_energy_within_10_years)

## EMISSIONS

### 2.1. MEP pleads for compromise on EU car CO2 law

17 July 2008, ENDS Europe Daily

Members of the European parliament's environment committee must put aside national concerns to avoid adopting "a totally confusing" position on draft EU legislation to curb carbon dioxide emissions from new cars, lead MEP Guido Sacconi said on Wednesday.

In a committee debate the Italian socialist rapporteur said the 256 changes so far proposed by MEPs to the plans showed "considerable nationalisation". "If MEPs stick to their national positions come what may, the committee vote will be a lottery and the result totally confusing", he said.

Mr Sacconi warned that this would weaken the parliament's hand in likely negotiations with EU governments (EED 06/06/08). He said he would draft compromise amendments the priority issues by the end of August, ready for a next meeting in September.

Mr Sacconi said his top priority was to secure a longer-term emission-reduction goal, to be met by 2020. A figure of 95 grams of CO<sub>2</sub> per kilometre (g/km) seems "ambitious but realistic", he said.

The Italian favours the European commission's proposed 130g/km emission limit for carmakers by 2012 (EED 19/12/08). But he softened his previous opposition to a phased introduction of the binding limit and now "would not object" to proposals for the final deadline to be moved to 2015 (EED 28/05/08).

But he said he would still oppose a similar phase-in of penalties payable by carmakers for exceeding emission limits. "It's either or...I'm not willing to compromise on that". Mr Sacconi was supported by most other speakers in the debate, including key MEPs from the centre-right EPP and liberal ALDE groups.

Mr Sacconi acknowledged calls for a mechanism to recognise the contribution of emission-cutting technological innovations not captured in the standard vehicle model approval tests. But such an "eco-innovation" system would have to "measure the real impact on emissions". France and Germany have suggested a credit of up to 8g/km (EED 10/06/08). The rapporteur said this "strikes me as much too much".

EU member state diplomats discussed the plans last week. A council of ministers source said they discussed eco-innovation and a potential 2020 reduction goal. Germany was the most vocal proponent of measures on eco-innovation. The meeting did not directly discuss France and Germany's joint proposals.

Follow-up: European parliament environment committee, tel: +32 2 285 2111.

Article Index: climate, economic instruments, energy, products, sustainability, transport

## **2.2. U.S.-Canada carbon trading group eyes 2012 start**

23 July 2008, Reuters

VANCOUVER, British Columbia (Reuters) - A coalition of U.S. states and Canadian provinces that have banded together to cut greenhouse gases will launch their carbon cap and trade system in 2012, according to a draft plan released on Wednesday.

The Western Climate Initiative's system will be phased in starting with industrial process emissions, with emissions from transportation and other fuels added to the system in 2015. It also will include emissions from electricity imported from sources outside of the group.

The WCI launched in 2007 has set a target of cutting greenhouse gas emissions to 15 percent below 2005 levels by 2020.

Cap and trade systems set limits on the emissions of gases such as carbon dioxide and methane linked to global warming, but allow major polluters to comply by purchasing offsetting credits from sellers who have not used their total emission allowances.

But the document released in advance of the WCI's scheduled meeting July 29 in San Diego, indicated the group's members were still wrangling over important details on issues such as how emission allowances will be apportioned between its members.

"My initial assessment is that it's a bit underwhelming," said Matt Horn of the Pembina Institute, a Canadian environmental group.

The group was established by U.S. governors, spearheaded by California's Arnold Schwarzenegger, who were tired of what they saw as the Bush administration's inaction on climate change and global warming.

It includes the U.S. states of California, Arizona, Montana, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah and Washington and the Canadian provinces of British Columbia, Quebec, Ontario and Manitoba.

The provinces, whose leaders also have been critical of the Canadian federal government on the issue, include two-thirds of the country's population and are responsible for 73 percent of Canada's GDP.

Several other U.S. and Mexican states have observer status in the WCI.

The draft released on Wednesday said the group's members will also use other fiscal measures to reduce carbon emissions, such as British Columbia's carbon tax that began this month and is the first of its kind in North America.

The plan calls for the WCI's members to begin mandatory monitoring by 2010 with all facilities with annual carbon emissions of 10,000 tons or more required to report.

