

## WRITTEN SUBMISSION FROM UNITE THE UNION SCOTLAND

### Introduction

Unite - the Union represents around 200,000 working people and their families throughout Scotland. We are the UK and Ireland's largest trade union with 2 million members in a range of industries including transport, construction, financial services, manufacturing, print and media, the voluntary and non-profit sectors, local government and the NHS.

As a Union with a significant membership in the wider energy sector - including workers in electricity, gas and nuclear power stations, offshore oil and gas production and opencast coal sites - we have a wide-ranging stake in the energy and climate change debate. Unite has continually articulated our belief that more needs to be done in a number of areas including renewable energy, energy efficiency, transport and the key role that our members can perform in the transition to a low carbon economy.

We also believe that existing low carbon-emitting energy sources including clean coal, nuclear power and carbon capture have a vital role to play in sustaining our energy demands and meeting our carbon emissions targets and wider environmental commitments.

Incorporated in this is response are a number of short responses to the areas of the interest Unite holds in this matter. For a fuller insight into Unite energy and environment policy please refer to our previous responses to Scottish Government consultations on these topics, which can be obtained from the union or via the Scottish Government's website.

### Emissions Reductions Targets

Unite - the Union believes a *balanced energy strategy* (incorporating clean coal, nuclear, oil, gas, and renewable sources), in tandem with improved transportation standards and changes in social behaviour, is crucial to facilitate the achievement of our wider emissions targets – in Scotland and the UK.

It is also essential that more support is directed towards established and emerging renewable technologies. This support must include incentivising companies and also in skills, training and retaining people in the sector to fulfil Scotland's significant low carbon energy potential. Great faith has been placed by the Scottish Government in the renewables agenda to solve the low carbon question. However, significant gaps exist between potential and reality.

A report by the Carbon Trust (2006), for example, illustrates the massive potential for tidal and wave power for supplying a significant amount of power to the electricity grid. The Trust estimate that marine energy could provide up to 20% of the UK's current electricity needs and become cost competitive with conventional and other renewables in the long term.

Marine energy has massive potential but there is still little operational capacity currently installed. At present there are two wave power devices in the UK – the Limpet unit of Islay and Pelamis on Orkney. Therefore, if Scotland, and the UK, is to realise the potential of marine technology then this will be dependent upon the right level of investment and support.

The position of Unite is further strengthened by comments made by the Minister for Finance and Sustainable Growth, John Swinney, at a STUC organised event on Energy and Climate Change in February 2008 when he predicted that the emerging renewables sector in particular wave and tidal power would not be mature nor commercially viable technologies for up to ten years. However, industry experts admitted at an Energy Conference organised by Unite and Scottish Engineering that while marine technology would play a major role in the future it was not going to make a substantial contribution for 20-30 years.

In relation to wind power, which we believe to be a potential major contributor to the energy sector, Unite has welcomed in principle the steps being taken to speed up the planning process (i.e. setting a target of nine months for new energy applications to be determined where there is no public inquiry). However, Unite retains concerns about the inconsistency in approach towards planning applications in the renewable sector. We note in particular the consent given to the wind farm proposals in Dumfries and Galloway and in Perthshire in contrast with the decision to refuse consent to Lewis Windpower for a wind farm at Barvas Moor in Lewis.

Furthermore there are outstanding issues in relation to the intermittency with wind power. On renewables, the House of Lords Economic Affairs Committee reported on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2008 concerns about security of supply. It concluded that wind turbines are the most readily available source of increases in renewable electricity but, as these only operate intermittently, they cannot be relied upon to generate electricity when it is needed.

Eon has also commented in August 2008 that due to the unreliability of wind energy particularly during the season of winter other forms of energy would be required to provide stability and the security of supply. Mike Farley of Doosan Babcock Energy has also recently highlighted a SKM report which stated that: *“Combined Scottish wind generation output will be 10% or less for around 20% of the time (i.e. one in five winters on average will experience wind power levels of 10% or less at times of peak demand)”*. This means one winter in five or one day in five we must completely (90% or more) backup the wind capacity with firm power.

We have been highly critical of the Scottish Government's energy policy which in our opinion has placed ideology above the national interest. This contention is based on our belief that by rejecting at the outset a proven, reliable and low carbon technology in the form of nuclear power it not only prohibits a full appraisal of the options available but it more fundamentally does a disservice to the national discourse on the vitally important subject of energy supply and emissions targets.

Additionally, the aforementioned factors of the intermittency of wind, the immaturity of marine technology, and, uncertainty over the timing regarding planned large scale Carbon Capture Storage demonstrations (estimates presently suggest the first operational capacity being in 2020) further strengthens our belief in the major operational difficulties that the Scottish Government's present energy policy will face - as it stands – to deliver Scotland's energy needs while fulfilling our ambitious climate change targets.

## **Forestry**

In conjunction with our trade union partners in the Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS), Unite as part of the Forestry Commission Trade Union (FCTU) side has previously responded to the Scottish Government's Consultation on Forestry Provisions in the Scottish Climate Change Bill.

We believe the National Forestry Estate (NFE) should continue to play a lead role in delivering Climate Change targets and we welcome the proposals for enabling legislation for Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) to enter into Joint Ventures for development of renewable energy programmes. This is likely to provide significant income to meet Scottish Government targets five to ten years from now.

However, we are absolutely opposed to the proposal to lease substantial areas of NFE land for forestry purposes and the granting of cutting rights over this forest. It follows, therefore, that the Unions are also opposed to transfer of this leased land to any Trust. A copy of the full response to the Scottish Government on the National Forest Estate can be obtained on request from the unions involved in the Forestry Commission.

## Energy Efficiency

Across the UK Unite members have worked with employers on energy efficiency projects. Unite drivers at Wincanton for example have been trained to use their vehicles to reduce fuel consumption and demonstrated that this could be done in a way that also made a significant financial saving for the company. The pilot involved detailed training of drivers without which fuel reduction would not have been achieved despite the introduction of sophisticated technology.

Other examples of Unite members' role in improving energy efficiency include:

**CUMMINS** - Workers at this company have helped to establish an environmental committee to reflect the eco-credentials of the employer. The company manufactures wind turbines and aims to recycle all waste produced in the manufacturing process.

**PANASONIC** - Unite members have argued the case for flexible working as a means of reducing the environmental impact of their workplace. A petition was submitted to the company to make starting and finishing times flexible in order to reduce traffic congestion.

**FUJITSU** - At Fujitsu, our members participate in the company's 'GreenTeam' initiative and have introduced environmental training for employees. Unite has also campaigned for CRT monitors to be replaced by flat screens to reduce electricity consumption, and, increasing video/teleconferencing usage.

The Energy Saving Trust for example predicts that by 2020, 45% of domestic electricity will be consumed by IT and electronics products. In Unite's previously published report '*How Green is Your Workplace*', a number of measures and technologies are highlighted which, if adopted, could improve energy efficiency. Examples include:

Smart buildings technologies, which monitor and adjust lighting, heating and energy use;  
Broadband, which facilitates communications through email, video and teleconferencing, and VOIP (Voice over internet protocol); and  
Multifunctional devices such as i-phone, all in one printers with inbuilt fax and scanner and blackberries help reduce the proliferation of electronic devices and can cut the use of paper.

Unite is optimistic about what workers can contribute to the preservation of the environment and to reducing energy consumption. Incremental and, in some cases, innovative and dynamic changes in workplaces are occurring because our members are raising awareness of climate change and energy issues.

## Transport

Encouraging a shift from the private car to bus and rail services will play a key role in helping to cut carbon emissions from the transport sector. In 2006, 67% of commuters travelled to work by car or van, 14% walked, 12% used the bus, 3% by train, 2% cycled and 2% used other modes of transport (source: the Scottish Transport Statistics (No. 26 – 2007 edition).

It is, therefore, vital that we address the issue of road traffic in Scotland because it is forecasted to grow by between 22% and 34% over the period 2002-2011 and it is also the second fastest growing source of emissions according to the Transport Scotland report titled '*Opportunities for offsetting carbon emissions on the Scottish trunk road network*' (2007).

The Department of Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform's *Energy Trends Brief* (March 2008) highlights that the transport sector accounted for 24% of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in 2007 - 92% was from road transport. Transport emissions are 11.5% higher than during 1990. The total number of vehicles licensed in Scotland was almost 2.6 million in 2006 which is 32% higher than in 1996 with road traffic forecasted to grow by between 22% and 34% over the period 2002-2011 according to Scottish Transport Statistics (no.26 -2007 edition).

Therefore, encouraging a shift from the private car to bus and rail services will play a central part in reducing carbon emissions and energy consumption. It is for these reasons Unite is very supportive of the Regulation of Bus Services Bill consultation launched by Charlie Gordon MSP. Unite believes this Bill to be a key component to this debate and urge all political parties in the national interest to support it.

## **Conclusion**

Unite retains a number of major concerns relating to the ability of the Scottish Government to deliver its climate change targets and delivering Scotland's future energy needs – both of which are inextricably linked. The Scottish Government's climate change target of an 80% cut in emissions by 2050 surpasses the aims of most countries.

However, the inconsistency in approach to renewables applications, in particular wind-power projects, the rejection of the future role of the nuclear industry, the lack of current investment in skills and training in key energy sectors, continued high rates of private cars for journeys as opposed to public transport, and, the present low levels of operation capacity in renewables industries means Scotland faces significant challenges if it is to fulfil its ambitious climate change targets while keeping the lights on.

Unite also wishes to state that we also have a series of consultation responses and documents which could complement this paper and provide greater in-depth analysis into the various facets of this debate e.g. energy and transport. Unite representatives would also be willing to supplement this paper by having further dialogue with the Committee via written and/or oral presentations.