

## SUBMISSION TO THE PIU'S SCOPING STUDY ON ENERGY BY

# CHRISTIAN ECOLOGY LINK

Christian Ecology Link (CEL) is a registered charity and voluntary organisation which aims to provide insights to environmental issues from the beliefs and values of the Christian faith community. This submission is by CEL's Energy team. The team was established specifically to address issues of energy provision, in response to growing concern about the proven and projected effects of fossil fuel burning on the atmosphere, and consequently on the created order. A submission by CEL's Anglican denominational team has been sent separately in order to meet the consultation deadline.

CEL believes that energy policy is becoming a moral issue of a scale unprecedented in human history. Our current reliance on fossil fuels raises profound questions about our commitment to core values of human society and to maintaining the integrity of creation. This review is an opportunity to set a long-term course for the UK Government which will not only ensure a decent quality of life for all UK citizens, but which will also demonstrably fulfil our obligations to future generations at home and abroad.

This submission does not pretend to make authoritative scientific judgements about the benefits and disbenefits of certain fuels. There are others far better qualified to do that. Rather it seeks to alert the PIU to ethical considerations on the subject of energy provision. Our analysis leads us to conclude that the scope of the review as currently proposed, whilst in itself welcome, contains certain deficiencies.

We are deeply concerned at the suggestion that an 'of the Government' report of agreed policy may be published as early as December. The present consultation asks for comments on the scope of the review without asking for comments on its content. Presenting a new national energy policy as a *fait accompli* would be a gross misjudgment of public concern on the issues raised in the report.

Accordingly we urge the PIU to publish a 'to the Government' report, containing recommendations for a programme of wider public consultation, including with young people who will have a greater stake in the outcome than the authors either of this submission or the final report.

### Specific comments

**Collateral and future cost accounting:** The scoping proposed does not sufficiently take into account the implications of the policies under review for persons beyond the geographical space and the time frame of the review. Whilst the review will evaluate options for energy provision in the UK to 2050, such evaluation must take into account:

- (a) the longer-term implications, for the environment, human livelihood and energy supply (for instance to 2100 or even beyond) of the policies which the report will evaluate

- (b) the need to leave a workable baseline for just and sustainable energy policy for the period commencing 2050
- (c) current and future Foreign Office and Department for International Development objectives, in particular global negotiations on climate change and trade
- (d) collateral and life-cycle costs of all technologies evaluated, including the effects of toxic emissions and residues. In this respect, we are pleased to see the scoping refer to the potential for internalisation of the environmental costs of fossil fuels. This principle should be invoked in respect of all fuels, including aviation and nuclear fuels. We believe this an essential step to developing an energy economy which represents interests beyond the self-interest of the current UK population. We also believe that such accounting discloses that nuclear energy and (under existing technologies) energy-from-waste offer false economies. Liability for such false economies would fall principally (but somewhat indiscriminately) in the communities hosting generating plant, and on the next generation. An energy policy which transfers liability in this way would be fundamentally unethical. We intend to expand on this concern if necessary at a future stage of consultation.

We are pleased that the review takes as authoritative the IPCC's recommendation for 60-80% reductions in greenhouse gases worldwide by 2050 (which will mean deeper cuts still for the UK). The PIU should acknowledge this target explicitly at the outset of its report as a constraint on its evaluations of options. The review must make develop synergy with the future UK Climate Change Programme and global negotiations for a framework to succeed the Kyoto protocol.

#### **Potential energy and economic yield of alternative sources and efficiency**

**measures:** The report should include an assessment of the ultimate capacity of renewable energy sources and innovative technology to meet existing and future demand. This will enable a clearer evaluation to be made of the possible scale of transfer to clean fuel technologies, increased energy efficiency and renewable generation. Such an assessment will also clarify the investment which will be necessary to facilitate such transfers, and the potential contribution to national prosperity. It should also include an assessment of the potential savings to be gained from improved planning and integrated transport policies.

**Public education and restraint:** The scoping takes as read that future energy demand must be met. Whilst demand management is mentioned in passing, it does not provide for an analysis of genuine energy needs. The report should acknowledge that it is at least theoretically possible that unmanaged demand cannot be met without unacceptable compromise to environmental and humanitarian objectives. This report should therefore explore establishing a hierarchy of energy needs in which energy input is measured against its contribution to quality of life. The first call on energy is from activity which secures survival, subsistence and health; less urgent priorities relate to, for instance, leisure and advertising.

We believe that without significant economic and cultural restructuring, emphasising the vitality of local economies, human activity is likely increasingly to militate against the common good. The report should consider whether it is possible to deliver equal or enhanced quality of life, together with reduced energy demand, using alternative cultural and economic models to those prevailing in the UK. For instance the report should promote discussion about whether increasing demand for transport, the fastest

growing source of CO2 emissions, is the only way of delivering prosperity, at home and abroad.

The report acknowledges that 'major behavioural changes will be necessary'. We believe that energy must begin to be known and handled as a valuable good. The PIU should make proposals as to how such a shift in attitude can be achieved, and examine the potential contribution that a public education programme could make to the management of demand, in partnership with NGOs and civil society.

We hope to see further, fully publicised, consultation on this issue, and look forward to the public engagement which the Government must stimulate in the grave decisions which lie ahead.