

FUEL CELL POWER

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The Energy Review Team,
Performance and Innovation Unit,
Cabinet Office,
Admiralty Arch, The Mall,
London SW1A 2WH.

19th September 2001

Dear Sirs,

PIU Project Energy Policy

As you suggest in your scoping note, the conflict between increasing world energy demand and the need to reduce emissions could be resolved by changing from fossil fuels to the utilisation of renewables. This will of course take time, but we already have the first hydrogen fuel cell powered van operating in the City of Westminster and buses will be introduced over the next few years in London. With a little support, the introduction of this technology could be expedited with the application of hydrogen fuel cells in urban fleets, specialist vehicles and small CLIP systems.

Your review also considers the problems of fuel poverty and industrial competitiveness if energy prices are increased in order to internalise the environmental costs of fossil fuels. This could be overcome in the case of smallscale CHP. For instance, residents in the Borough of Woking have been able to save money through a Council scheme, as both electricity and heat are provided efficiently from the same fuel source. There will also be benefits from economies of scale as largescale production of hydrogen and fuel cells gets underway. In the future, the availability of renewable fuels could help to keep costs competitive if fossil fuels become more expensive and if, as projected, the UK becomes a net oil importer in about five years time.

The use of hydrogen fuel cells will extend the market for renewable fuels and enable them to be used as power sources for road transport, starting with the urban fleet sector. In order to ensure security of supply, we would like to see more support for the commercial introduction of hydrogen from wind, wave, waste products and biomass sources.

The long term goal of 60-80% cuts worldwide in greenhouse gas emissions can only be met if renewable energy sources are utilised, ideally in conjunction with hydrogen fuel cells. It should be possible to enable future growth in energy demand, particularly from developing countries, to be met from indigenous, renewable sources.

Yours faithfully,

Jean Aldous

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