

SUBMISSION BY SCOTTISH CONSERVATIVE MSP GROUP TO THE PIU ENERGY REVIEW

In addressing future United Kingdom energy policy, it is necessary to consider Scotland's needs and production capabilities relative to our overall UK energy requirements. This UK wide approach must be set in a context in which both environmental and economic considerations push in the same direction.

Nuclear power stations have been contributing to the nation's energy needs for over 40 years and now generate around 25% of all the electricity within the United Kingdom.

Nuclear energy is, by far, the largest source of electricity in Scotland. Nuclear power has proved to be a reliable source of power and has created both employment and investment at the sites of Scotland's five nuclear power stations. Nuclear energy also ensures a secure and balanced national energy supply and helps the UK to contribute to international efforts to tackle greenhouse gases and global warming.

We believe that the nuclear industry has demonstrated a good safety record throughout its history in the UK and with further improvements in technology nuclear waste disposal issues and decommissioning can be tackled safely and cost effectively in the future.

Sources of energy production in Scotland currently comprise 50% nuclear, 10% hydro and 40% from other generated sources including gas, oil, coal and renewables. This of course, can be compared directly to the UK wide figures, where nuclear power generates only 25% of the total electricity supply.

Currently around a quarter of Scotland's generated electricity is sold to the other parts of the UK and it is important that this export market is retained.

The use of nuclear energy is environmentally friendly and plays an important part in meeting our CO₂ and greenhouse gas reduction targets. The replacement of nuclear power stations by fossil fuel generators would result in emissions of 50 million tonnes of CO₂ per year – equivalent to 50% of the emissions currently emitted by vehicles in Britain.

Nuclear energy also provides energy to meet the needs of the consumer at levels which cannot be maintained solely by renewables and even allowing for increased efficiency in the use of energy and increase in the provision of renewables, there would still be a gap in provision.

If we do not continue nuclear provision in Scotland, it is difficult to see where substitute energy sources could be found which would meet the foreseeable demands of both business and domestic consumers. For this reason, it seems to us that a continued nuclear energy production capability is essential.

Of the existing nuclear power plants in Scotland, Chapelcross' lifespan is due to end in 2008, Hunterston B's in 2011 and Torness in 2023. Dounreay and Hunterston A are currently being decommissioned. It is therefore vital that urgent consideration is given to the future of our nuclear industry as part of a balanced production capability.

The commissioning of a new nuclear power station is a lengthy process, estimated to be five years in terms of licensing and planning and five years in construction and thus the relevant decisions need to be made as soon as possible.

The existing locations at Hunterston and Torness would be suitable as sites for new reactors to replace those already *in situ*. The advantage of this proposal would be the ability to utilise the existing infrastructure at the sites.

To ensure that both the UK and Scotland has a secure power supply for the foreseeable future and to plan not just for this generation but the next, we would strongly urge that a strategy of continued provision at Hunterston and Torness be endorsed and that planning commence forthwith for decommissioning of the existing plants on expiry of their lifespan and commissioning of the new plants to meet the needs of the major part of this century.

ADDENDUM TO THE SUBMISSION BY THE SCOTTISH CONSERVATIVE MSP GROUP TO THE PIU ENERGY REVIEW

For the avoidance of doubt it should be clear that we consider the existing location at Chapelcross near Annan would be as suitable as the existing reactors at Hunterston and Torness as a site for a new reactor to replace those already *in situ*. The omission of a specific reference to Chapelcross in our submission was not intended to indicate that we gave any preference to the locations at Hunterston and Torness over the Chapelcross site and we strongly urge that a strategy of continued provision at Chapelcross be endorsed and that all necessary support is provided for putting forward proposals for a new reactor on the Chapelcross site.