



Web: www.renewableuk-cymru.com

Email: cymru@RenewableUK.com

4th December 2023

Jack Sargeant MS,
Chair of the Petitions Committee,
Senedd Cymru
Welsh Parliament,
Cardiff Bay,
Cardiff.
CF99 1SN

Dear Mr Sargeant,

I am writing from RenewableUK Cymru – the voice of the Welsh renewables sector - to provide evidence against the petition 'Pause onshore wind & solar projects >10MW until the full potential of off-shore wind is included'.

We are in the midst of a climate, biodiversity and land degradation crisis in Wales that is threatening our very way of life. The Welsh Government has set a target for all of Wales' electricity consumption to come from renewable sources by 2035^[1] – a key milestone in our transition away from fossil fuels and our journey towards net zero. Electrification will transform all our lives and the 'electrification shift' to a very different energy system requires true strategic leadership.

Are we building enough clean power to meet this critical target?

Regrettably, Wales' performance and delivery to date in clean energy generation is disconcerting. According to the Welsh Government's latest Energy Generation in Wales 2022 report^[2], our increase in renewable energy capacity last year was only 43MW - a mere fraction compared to Scotland's deployment of 1,621MW. Wales is trailing behind because of low consenting rates, an under-resourced planning regime and a lack of grid infrastructure – all leading to significant delays in renewable energy projects being built and generating clean energy.

From a climate perspective, onshore wind is one of the quickest and cheapest way to cut carbon emissions. The current pipeline of onshore wind and solar projects in Wales is essential for speeding up our decarbonisation journey and developing the Welsh skills and supply chain needed for offshore wind in the Celtic Sea over the next ten years.

In RenewableUK Cymru's latest report, '[The Critical Role of Welsh Wind Power](#)'^[3] our data analysts provide a snapshot of the current and future energy generation pipeline from onshore and offshore wind. Wales currently has almost 2GW of

wind power projects up and running. To meet our net zero targets we estimate we will need to quadruple this wind capacity from 2 to 9GW in just over a decade.

The estimated electricity demand for Wales by 2035 has been set at 29TWh in the Welsh Government's recent consultation[4]. However, when compared to the technology projections for each of the National Grid ESO's Future Energy Scenarios[5], this 29TWh is most closely aligned with the 'falling short' scenario. For this reason it should be considered a minimum target.

Our collated data suggests that onshore wind is essential to meeting this target and could deliver in excess of 3GW of clean power by 2035. Coupled with the predicted capacity from fixed offshore wind in North Wales and floating offshore wind in the Celtic Sea, Wales has the potential to generate 9GW of wind power, producing 27.5TWh of electricity a year to meet the predicted Welsh demand.

However, this capacity and potential will only be realised if we adopt a bold and ambitious delivery plan now to enable projects to proceed at scale and pace. Further delays, as advocated for in this petition, work against the interests of current and future generations in addressing the climate emergency.

The transition to renewables is also an opportunity to promote social and environmental benefits. Our recent report [Onshore Wind in Wales: How our sector works with communities](#)[6] demonstrates how different regions in Wales stand to gain far more than just clean energy from the pipeline of onshore wind projects. The onshore wind sector already contributes more than £6.5 million a year to Welsh communities and could grow to £20 million with the current projected pipeline.

There is also a particular opportunity for onshore wind to promote nature restoration and recovery. Onshore wind farms are typically situated in remote highland areas which often contain degraded peatlands. Onshore wind developers are already working to restore damaged peatland, to secure its value as a carbon store and ecological habitat for rare species. Developers represent important partners to provide a reliable and consistent source of additional funding, helping to meet the Welsh Government's National Peatland Action Programme restoration targets and reducing the burden on taxpayers.

RenewableUK Cymru's members are building our future energy system, powered by clean electricity. A future which is better for industry, billpayers, and the environment. On their behalf, we strongly urge you to dismiss this petition and work with us to support a clear delivery plan for Wales.

Yours Sincerely,



Jess Hooper,

Director, RenewableUK Cymru

[1] [Wales aims to meet 100% of its electricity needs from renewable sources by 2035 | GOV.WALES](#)

[2] [Energy Generation in Wales: 2022 \(gov.wales\)](#)

[3] [Future-Energy-Wales-The-Critical-Role-of-Welsh-Wind-Power.pdf \(renewableuk-cymru.com\)](#)

[4] [Future Energy Grids for Wales: Insights report \(gov.wales\)](#)

[5] [Future Energy Scenarios | ESO \(nationalgrideso.com\)](#)

[6] [How-onshore-wind-works-with-communities-WALES-1.pdf \(renewableuk-cymru.com\)](#)