12th August, 2010

Objection to Hunterston Power Station Planning Application

We, the World Development Movement (WDM), wish to formally object to the proposed coal (multi-fuel) power station at Hunterston and ask that the Scottish Government reject outright Ayrshire Power's planning application.

Introduction

The World Development Movement (WDM) campaigns to tackle the root causes of poverty. With our partners around the world, we win positive change for the world's poorest people. We believe that charity is not enough. We lobby governments and companies to change policies that keep people poor. WDM is a democratic membership organisation of 15,000 individuals and 60 local volunteer groups, with offices in London and Edinburgh.

Summary of objection

- As an organisation that campaigns in solidarity with people in the developing world to tackle the root causes of poverty, WDM's objection is primarily based on the concern that the proposed 1600MW power station, capturing between 15 and 25 per cent of its emissions, would have horrendous impacts on the lives and livelihoods of hundreds of thousands of people across the world through the climate change it would cause. Scotland owes a huge climate debt to countries across the world which have had, and continue to have, far lower emissions than us. It is vital that we stop increasing this debt by making large and quick reductions in our own emissions. Building a new power plant at Hunterston will increase Scotland's climate debt and is the wrong thing to do.

- A decision in favour of this planning application would jeopardise greenhouse gas emission reduction targets set in the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, as well as UK efforts to reduce emissions. It may increase the amount of carbon credits purchased by the Scottish government. It could also undermine efforts to reach international agreement to reduce greenhouse gas emission by showing that rich country governments are not willing to implement the policies needed to decarbonise their economies.

- By giving the go ahead for a new power plant at Hunterston, the Scottish government would lock Scotland into 40 or so more years of fossil fuel power, when research shows that by 2030 renewable energy can meet between 60 per cent and 143 per cent of Scotland's projected annual electricity demand.

- WDM believes that consent should not be given to any new coal power station except demonstration projects which fully operate 100 per cent carbon capture and storage technology from day one. We also believe that the Scottish Government should introduce an emissions performance standard now, at a level of 300g/kWh, for consent to be given for new power stations, and then falling to around 100g/kWh in the early 2020s for all power stations.

Impact on climate change and the need for climate justice

Climate change is a threat to the lives and livelihoods of hundreds of millions of people around the world. Even with average global warming of 0.8°C, it is estimated that 300,000 people are already dying every year from the effects of climate change.[1]

Based on its global contribution to warming of 3-4°C, and climate change impacts predicted by the IPCC and Stern Review, operating from 2015 to 2050, one new 1600MW coal power station built in Scotland could be responsible for:

- 100,000 people losing their dry season water supply due to glaciers melting
- 30,000 to 60,000 more people suffering from drought in Africa
- 20,000 people being forced out of their homes and becoming climate refugees
- 50,000 people being at risk of hunger due to drought and lower crop yields
- 100 to 300 people dying *every year* due to malnutrition
- Around 30,000 more people suffering every year due to coastal flooding
- Up-to 40,000 more people exposed to malaria across the world.

Rich nations, including Scotland, are overwhelmingly responsible for past and present greenhouse gas emissions, and so for the impacts of climate change. This is a clear injustice. Rich countries, with less than 20 per cent of the world's population, account for around 70 per cent of historical CO_2 emissions. The UK has less than 1 per cent of the world's population, but is responsible for over 6 per cent of historical emissions, and 2 per cent of current emissions (see Table 1 below). The UK continues to emit around 10 tonnes of carbon dioxide per person, compared to 4 tonnes in China, 1 tonne in India and 0.3 tonnes in Bangladesh.[2]

[1] Global Humanitarian Forum. (2009). *Climate change: The anatomy of a silent crisis.* May 2009.

[2] US EIA. (2009). World Per Capita Carbon Dioxide Emissions from the Consumption and Flaring of Fossil Fuels, 1980-2006. US Energy Information Administration.

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Table 1: Contribution to global CO_2 emissions from the consumption of fossil fuels (percentage)[3]

	Industrialised countries	Developing countries	UK
Current emissions contribution	54	46	2.0
Historical emissions contribution	69	31	6.2
Percentage share of world population	18	82	0.9

The UK's past and present emissions mean we owe a huge climate debt to countries across the world which have had, and continue to have, far lower emissions than us. It is vital that we stop increasing this debt by making large and quick reductions in our own emissions.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reported in 2007 that to keep the increase in global temperatures between 2°C and 2.4°C above pre-industrial levels requires global emissions to peak between now and 2015 at the latest, and then fall by between 50 and 85 per cent on 2000 levels by 2050.[4] For the UK to play its part in reducing global emissions by 50-85 per cent by 2050 requires UK emissions to fall by 80-95 per cent by 2050 (see Table 1 below).

[3] The data set on historical emissions was taken from the World Resources Institute. See: http://cait.wri.org/cait.php?page=cumul&mode=view. The data set on current emissions was taken from the US Energy Information Administration. See: http://www.eia.doe.gov/environment.html

[4] IPCC. (2007). *Climate Change 2007: Mitigation.* Summary for Policymakers. Contribution of Working Group III to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. 04/05/07.

Table 1: Global and UK required emissions reductions by 2050[5]

	Global emissions of CO_2 from the burning of fossil fuels	**UK emissions of CO_2 from the burning of fossil fuels**
2000 total emissions	23.8 billion tonnes	555 million tonnes
2000 per person emissions	3.9 tonnes	9.3 tonnes
2050 total emissions	3.6 - 11.9 billion tonnes	36 – 108 million tonnes
2050 per person emissions	0.6 – 1.8 tonnes	0.6 – 1.8 tonnes

For global emissions to peak by 2015 at the latest rich countries like the UK must make sizeable reductions in emissions straightaway. To reduce UK emissions by 80 per cent by 2050 means UK emissions need to fall by 40 per cent by 2020 and 60 per cent by 2030.

Given that this scale of cuts does not adequately protect against global temperature increases of 2°C or more, if the UK can cut emissions more quickly, it must do so. Approving Ayrshire Power's planning application for the new plant at Hunterston would move Scotland and the UK in the wrong direction.

Impact on Scotland's ability to meet its greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets and the impact on UK and international efforts to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions.

WDM believes that allowing a new power plant to be built at Hunterston would seriously jeopardise the greenhouse gas emission reduction targets set in the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. This would also undermine UK's overall ability to make the cuts in greenhouse gas emissions that are needed.

A new 1600MW coal power station, like that in Ayrshire Power's planning application, capturing just 20-25 per cent of its carbon dioxide, would emit around 6 million tonnes of carbon dioxide every year; more than the whole of Tanzania. It would seriously undermine

[5] US EIA. (2007). World Carbon Dioxide Emissions from the Consumption and Flaring of Fossil Fuels, 1980-2005. US Energy Information Administration. June 2007.

the Scottish government's ability to meet its greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets set in law, put additional pressure on other sectors to compensate by reducing their emissions further and may result in the need to purchase carbon credits to offset the additional emissions caused by the proposed plant.

WDM strongly urges the Scottish government not to put Scotland into the position of having to increase its purchasing of carbon credits by giving the go ahead to Ayrshire Power's planning application for the power plant at Hunterston. There are serious concerns about effectiveness of carbon credits in reducing global emission levels. There is evidence that in some cases credits have been granted after the project had actually taken place, indicating that it would have happened anyway. One estimate is that between one-third and two-thirds of projects in developing countries which have been granted carbon credits would have happened anyway.

Furthermore, there is evidence that Clean Development Mechanism credits can actually increase pollution. For example, the largest number of carbon credits has been generated by projects claiming to reduce emissions of the potent greenhouse gas HFC-23, rather than CO_2. One study has found that the value of credits given to HFC-23 projects at current carbon prices is €4.7 billion. However, an estimate of the cost of technology needed to capture and destroy the same amount of HFC-23 is €0.1 billion. Around €4.6 billion has been generated in profit by HFC-23 generating plants, which could then further expand their operations with the reinvestment of this profit.

Indian campaigner against the impacts of some Clean Development Mechanism projects, Mahesh Pandya, says: "It is unjust that the rich are allowed to emit whilst paying for more pollution for the poor."

In addition, if the Scottish government allows this new, largely unabated, coal power station to be built, it would be effectively saying that it is happy to commit the world to warming of 3-4°C. Such a decision would destroy any credibility the UK has in international climate change negotiations, showing once again that rich country governments are not willing to implement the policies needed to decarbonise their economies.

Lack of need for new coal in Scotland

Independent research commissioned by the World Development Movement and other NGOs in 2009 from Garrad Hassan showed that there is enormous potential to increase the generation of electricity in Scotland from renewable sources during the next two decades, and that by 2030 renewable energy can meet between 60% and 143% of Scotland's projected annual electricity demand, depending on the level of investment in energy saving and new renewables.[6]

That research also found that:

"Decommissioning large, centralised generation capacity at Cockenzie, Hunterston B and Torness will not compromise Scotland's energy security, especially if Scotland takes measures to reduce our demand for electricity through energy efficiency measures, and by electrification of some degree of heat and transport demand.

"However, combining increased development of renewables with a realistic programme of demand reduction means that Scotland's renewable resource can meet – and exceed – our annual electricity demand, even when a significant proportion of heating and transport demand are electrified. Under such a scenario, it is entirely feasible for **all centralised thermal generation to be closed by 2030**, delivering almost complete decarbonisation, with our security of supply relying on interconnectors, storage and deferrable demand."[7]

The report showed for the first time that a truly sustainable energy future is achievable for Scotland without the need for fossil-fuel power.

Ends/...

Objection submitted by the World Development Movement, Thorn House, 5 Rose St, Edinburgh EH2 2PR

For more information please contact Liz Murray on 0131 243 2730 or liz@wdmscotland.org.uk.

[6]Garrad Hassan and Ben Murray; the Power of Scotland Renewed; clean, green energy for the nation's future. 2009. Commissioned by WDM, FoES, WWF and RSPB.

[7]Ibid, p11