

NEMT Policy on Wind Farms

Climate change is truly an emergency and existential threat. NEMT supports in principle developments that contribute to its reduction.

Wind energy is an essential part of Scotland's future energy mix, but it should not be expanded to the exclusion of other methods of renewable energy generation which could have an equal effect on carbon reduction possibly with lower environmental disadvantages.

Development of further wind farms needs to proceed in parallel with work to reduce energy demand and loss as waste. Energy demand and waste reduction need to be addressed with greater urgency.

Developers select sites for wind turbines on commercial criteria and can pay insufficient attention to landscape issues. The cost of moving from the commercial optimum to a site not impinging on wild land is a small increment, which surveys have demonstrated that the public are willing to pay to preserve our remaining wild land. There are currently sites for further wind farms, particularly sea locations, where they can be built without threatening our most prized landscapes. Government should take more action to encourage developers to avoid areas of high landscape value.

Certain areas of the country are reaching saturation point in terms of wind turbine coverage and these need to be protected against further development.

Economics currently favours industrial-scale developments rather than small clusters or single turbines for which there are numerous sites, particularly on enclosed farmland. Government policy should support smaller-scale initiatives more strongly.

While the height of turbines can have negative visual impacts, NEMT considers that the repowering of existing sites with larger turbines is of less concern than the development of new sites which impinge on Scotland's finest landscapes.

In parallel with the development of wind farms, we need to see work on peatland protection and restoration and forest expansion, which both have a role to play in increasing carbon sequestration.

NEMT supports the principle of designating areas of Scotland where wind farms would not be permitted because of adverse impacts on the landscape.

NEMT will not object to the development of wind farms except in the following cases:

- Where the proposed development impinges on an area of wild land including those identified by SNH in 2014.
- Where the area concerned is viewed as at saturation point.
- On or near certain local iconic sites, such as Pressendye and Clachnaben, which are known to be visited regularly by mountaineers and walkers.
- We would only object to a development not covered by the above after consultation with members

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