



Nuclear Industry Association

5th Floor, Tower House,
10 Southampton Street,
London WC2E 7HA

TEL +44(0)20 7766 6640

EMAIL info@niauk.org

VISIT www.niauk.org

FOLLOW @NIAUK

Royal Society of Edinburgh inquiry into Scotland's Energy Future: Nuclear Industry Association response

The Nuclear Industry Association (NIA) welcomes this opportunity to respond to the Royal Society of Edinburgh's inquiry into Scotland's Energy Future. As the RSE notes, this is propitious timing for such a survey given the major changes taking place in the Scottish energy sector and in the light of the Scottish Government's proposed new energy strategy.

About the NIA

NIA is the trade association, information and representative body for the civil nuclear industry in the UK. It represents about 260 companies operating across all aspects of the nuclear fuel cycle, including several Scottish companies.

Many of these companies actively support the UK's nuclear sector, including the operation of Hunterston B and Torness nuclear power stations, and decommissioning activities at Hunterston A, Dounreay and Chapelcross.

Future Scottish Energy Mix

As a trade body representing the nuclear industry the NIA is not in a position to respond to all of the detailed questions set out in the RSE's consultation. We should however like to make some broader points relating to the future Energy Mix question.

As we noted in response to their consultation earlier this year the NIA supports the Scottish Government's strong commitment to fighting climate change and to devising an integrated energy strategy, including decarbonisation, to deliver this. However we strongly believe that a decarbonisation target (for providing 50% of Scotland's energy consumption), rather than a simple renewables target, would be the best means of achieving this. This would facilitate the most efficient and cost effective mix of low carbon technologies, and benefit the Scottish consumer.

In this context we recognise that the Scottish Government's current policy is that the existing nuclear stations should not be replaced. However in view of the massive contribution they have made to reducing Scottish CO2 emissions over many years we believe it would be a mistake to rule out a future role for nuclear energy at this stage. In our view, new nuclear plant have the potential, alongside renewables, to be a key part of a

future low carbon energy mix. In particular this would ensure a continuing contribution from a non-intermittent baseload generation, which would offer system stability at a time of increased renewables deployment.

The two current nuclear power stations in Scotland, Hunterston B and Torness, generated 17.8TWh in 2015 or around 35% of total generation in Scotland, and enough to meet 49% of Scottish electricity demand. Compared to the carbon emissions of CCGT plant they also between them saved 6.22MtCO₂ in 2016, equivalent to removing 2.73 million cars off the road. More generally the sites make a significant economic contribution to the local economies in North Ayrshire and East Lothian.

In summary we agree with the Scottish Government's strategic objectives of achieving reliable supplies of energy; affordable energy requirements; and sustained decarbonisation, and agree renewables can make a major contribution to achieving these. However we believe that a future low carbon generating mix including both nuclear and renewables, could potentially provide a more cost-effective and efficient means of achieving decarbonisation than relying on renewables alone.

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