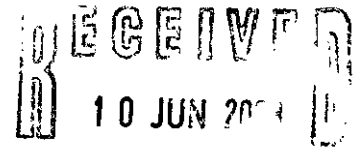
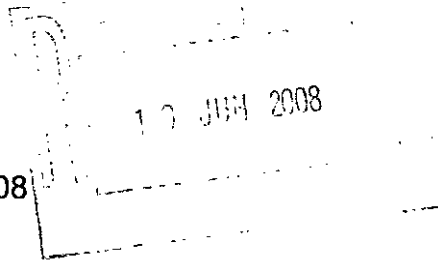


Elin Jones AM/AC
Y Gweinidog dros Faterion Gwledig
Minister for Rural Affairs



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
 Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref
 Ein cyf/Our ref EJ/00496/08



Val Lloyd
 Chair
 Petitions Committee

APD

9 June 2008

Dear Val,

I refer to your letter dated 13 May 2008 to Jane Davidson, Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing (reference PET-03-116) in respect of the National Forest Estate Windfarm Programme (NFEWP) which has been passed to me to reply because I am the Minister with responsibility for forestry which includes the NFEWP.

The Welsh Assembly Government's strategy for renewable energy reflected in Technical Advice Note 8 (TAN 8) outlines 7 Strategic Search Areas (SSAs) in Wales where developers can seek to develop windfarms to contribute towards meeting the Welsh Assembly Government's 2010 renewable energy target of 4TWhrs per annum. Much of the land within these areas is owned by the Welsh Assembly Government who are able to dispose of this land and it is managed on their behalf by Forestry Commission Wales (FCW). Ministers instructed FCW to proceed with tendering these areas for windfarm development in 2005. FCW developed and managed the NFEWP procurement process, the results of which were approved in principle by Ministers in October 2007. Dyfnant Forest is within SSA B and was therefore included in the tender.

During the procurement process, FCW asked bidders to provide their proposals for community consultation and these have been scored against the British Wind Energy Association best practice guidelines. Bidders were scored on how they intended to incorporate feedback from the local community into their proposals during the consultation process and were also asked to provide FCW with a method statement setting out the constraints and drivers considered in designing the layout for the wind-farm. This statement and the layout were evaluated by technical advisors.

Five of the 'options to develop' on the FCW-managed estate have now been completed, one of which is SSA B which includes Dyfnant forest. The successful bidders have entered into a legally binding contract with the Welsh Assembly Government which will provide them, following the successful commissioning of the wind power system, with a lease which will enable them to operate over a 25-year period. Apart from the policy reasons described

above, as there is a binding contractual commitment between the Welsh Assembly Government and the developer, it is not possible to rescind the decision to select Dyfnant forest for windfarm development.

It should be noted however that all of the successful bidders will have to make a planning application to the relevant planning authority prior to any development taking place. Any developer submitting an application will have to show as part of their application what impact the proposed development will have on the area. The statutory process will also give interested groups and individuals the opportunity to object to or raise concerns about the application. Should consent be granted, it may be subject to conditions.

I am satisfied that the Assembly Government is acting within its powers on this matter and that its actions fully accord with its published policy of increasing the amount of energy generated from renewable resources and that all formal consultation procedures will be adhered to by the relevant parties concerned when appropriate.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elin Jones', with a small flourish at the end.

Elin Jones AC/AM
Y Gweinidog dros Faterion Gwledig
Minister for Rural Affairs