

# 'Turn your backs on wind'

Scotland's ongoing parliamentary inquiry into renewable energy has heard repeated calls in the last few weeks for the industry to diversify away from onshore wind.

The Enterprise and Culture Committee has been presented with evidence from statutory consultees, anti-wind farm groups and others that non-wind sources should contribute more to national renewable targets.

Scottish National Heritage was one of the few bodies

## Parliamentary inquiry hears demands for greater renewables diversification



putting numbers to their plea, saying that no more than two-thirds of renewables should come from onshore wind.

Maf Smith of the Scottish Renewables Forum points out that while it may be realistic to talk about marine and biomass making a substantial impact on Scotland's 2020 targets, it will be wind and hydro that meet the 2010

figure of 18%. He adds that even a 2020 non-wind contribution depends on having the right support mechanisms in place to push wet and biotechnologies into the commercial realm.

"We need to get the process moving now with a realistic commitment," says Smith. Developers, while widely supportive of their

renewable stable-mates, agree. "Nobody but nobody is going to be making a major development effort into these new renewables until they have a similar commercial profile to onshore wind," says one. "And they are basically 15 years behind where we are now."

Another source adds that while there is ample room for small-scale renewables, existing biomass technology and simple energy conservation to make an impact before 2010, wind would make up the overwhelming majority of the 3.5GW of green power likely to come on-line by the end of the decade.

Having heard the diversification message, the Enterprise and Culture Committee - which has reached the half-way mark of evidence gathering - is expected to shift its focus away from wind in the coming weeks and look more closely at other renewables.

Site visits to hydro, marine and biomass facilities are understood to be on the menu and it is thought likely that non-wind renewables will have a high profile when the committee's findings are drawn up later this year.

The report is expected to go to the Scottish Parliament no sooner than the summer. Ministers then have eight weeks to reply officially to the findings and it is thought a debate will be held in Edinburgh before the end of the year.

Still to go before the committee are Ofgem, the Department of Trade and Industry, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, National Grid, Ministry of Defence, Civil Aviation Authority, the European Commission and Scottish ministers.

'Interested parties' filed almost 200 written submissions by the 26 January deadline.

Follow the inquiry at:

[www.scottish.parliament.uk/enterprise/index.htm](http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/enterprise/index.htm)

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