

Press Release

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For immediate release.

CONSUMERS PAY SCOTTISH WINDFARMS TO THROW ENERGY AWAY

The *Sunday Times* has today published a story based on research by the Renewable Energy Foundation (REF) into the scale of constraint payments currently being made to wind farms in Scotland*. Constraint payments are made to a contracted power station that agrees to stop generating in order to stabilize the network, so these Scottish windfarms are in effect being paid to throw electricity away.

The published story focused on the largest of these incidents so far, which occurred on the 5-6th April, when the Scottish grid network could not absorb all the energy being generated, and was forced to constrain wind power off the system, paying the very high prices demanded by the wind generators - some as high as 20 times the value of the electricity which would otherwise have been generated.

In total some £890,000 pounds was paid over a few hours to six wind farms, these costs being ultimately destined to pass through to the consumer.

REF is today publishing an information note on the subject providing a more detailed account, and giving further information of the scale of the constraint payments currently being made**.

Amongst the most significant payments made were those to Whitelee windfarm, which received over £300,000 in April 2011, and Farr windfarm, which received £260,000 in the same month.

REF estimates total payments to Scottish wind farms not to generate have now passed the million pound mark.

Dr Lee Moroney, Planning Director for REF, said: "The variability of wind power poses grid management problems for which there are no cheap solutions. However, throwing the energy away, and paying wind farms handsomely for doing so, is not only costly but obviously very wasteful. Government must rethink the scale and pace of wind power development before the costs of managing it become intolerable and the scale of the waste scandalous."

* Requires subscription: http://www.thesundaytimes.co.uk/sto/news/uk_news/Environment/article616251.ece

** <http://www.ref.org.uk/publications/231-high-rewards-for-wind-farms-discarding-electricity-5th-6th-april-2011>

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For more information please email Margareta Stanley on press@ref.org.uk or telephone 020 79303636 or 07968 049832

Notes for Editors:

The Renewable Energy Foundation is a registered charity promoting sustainable development for the benefit of the public by means of energy conservation and the use of renewable energy. See www.ref.org.uk REF is supported by private donation and has no political affiliation or corporate membership. In pursuit of its principal goals REF highlights the need for an overall energy policy that is balanced, ecologically sensitive, and effective. REF makes freely available the most comprehensive database of renewable energy generator performance in the United Kingdom:

<http://www.ref.org.uk/roc-generators/>