

Countryside Update

May 2005 (issue no. 66)

Ramblers' Launches Campaign on Renewables Obligation

The Ramblers' Association has launched a major campaign calling for a change to the Renewables Obligation. This is currently being reviewed by the Department for Trade and Industry, so it is an ideal time to ask Government to rethink its strategy for the funding behind renewable energy.

We have placed adverts in papers including The Sunday Times, Mail on Sunday and The Herald. The first advert was placed on the Sunday before the General Election asking for prospective Parliamentary Candidates to call for a change to the Renewables Obligation, this was updated with an advert in the newspapers this Sunday asking MPs to support the campaign.

The Ramblers' Association will be putting in a central response and we are asking all members and volunteers to help us in the following ways:

Write a letter to the DTI (write as an individual, rather than as a representative of the Ramblers' Association. This is more powerful and will make sure there are no contrasting views) and include the following bullet points:

- The Renewables Obligation has created a system that overwhelmingly favours on-shore wind turbines. The financial driver of the Renewables Obligation should differentiate between the different

technologies and their readiness for the market.

- There is an urgent need for reform of financial support to make sure that the renewable energy sector encourages a wide range of technologies.
- The reliance of electricity from wind turbines feeding our existing transmission and distribution system runs the danger of instability in the grid.
- There is a clear need to plan for an appropriate energy mix which will ensure a secure and efficient supply of electricity from renewable sources, in locations which can accommodate them without adverse environmental impacts.
- There is a need to ensure that targets for energy efficiency and demand reduction across all sectors are set and met in order to meet our CO2 emissions targets.

Letters should be addressed to:

Megan Bingham-Walker,
Renewable Energy Policy,
Department of Trade and Industry,
Bay 110,
1 Victoria Street,
London,
SW1H 0ET

Please encourage others to write send us a copy of the letter as well.

Circular no. Date From	05/45 May 2005 Ramblers' Association Countryside Protection Team – Central Office Sarah Williams – Tel 020 7339 8571 Email sarahw@london.ramblers.org.uk NB – Please contact Sarah if you would like to add others to the circulation list	For To	Information Area and Group Countryside Officers Area and Group Secretaries Area Media Contacts England and Wales (Scotland for Information only) Staff and EC Countryside Update members Extra Countryside Secretaries
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Contact your MP and ask them to support our campaign.

We need to build up support among MPs for our campaign. It would be great if you could write to your MP and ask for their views on the Renewables Obligation. Explain how concerned you are with the current funding system. MPs often use the numbers of letters from constituents as a gauge to whether they should be involved in a campaign, so please encourage others to write as well (use local Ramblers' newsletters and meetings).

If your MP supports the campaign, please let us know.

We are trying to identify MPs which support the campaign so we can ask them to support us in other ways.

Raise the issue in the local media.

Another way to raise awareness of this is to look for opportunities to raise the issue in the local media. This could be particularly beneficial if you have issues about wind turbine development in your area. Explain that the review is taking place and that the Ramblers' Association is campaigning on the issue.

There is more information on our website at www.ramblers.org.uk/countryside/energy. If you don't have access to the Internet, then you can contact the Ramblers' Association central office for more information.

Who's Who in the New Government

Post election the new Government has had its standard reshuffle. There are changes to most of the departments. Of most note to the Ramblers' Association is that Alun Michael is no longer the Minister for Rural Affairs. In fact there is no Minister for Rural Affairs, just a Parliamentary Secretary.

Defra's new team is as follows:

Margaret Beckett stays as Secretary of State for Defra.

Elliot Morley is Minister of State (climate change and the environment).

Ben Bradshaw is Parliamentary Secretary with responsibility for local environment, marine and animal welfare.

Lord Bach of Lutterworth is Parliamentary Secretary with responsibility for sustainable food and farming.

Jim Knight is Parliamentary Secretary with responsibility for rural affairs, landscape and biodiversity.

Countryside Agency Backs Extension to National Park Boundary

The Countryside Agency recently decided to support the extension of the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales National Park boundaries.

The board met earlier this month and agreed that the land between the two national parks met the statutory criteria for either national park or area of outstanding natural beauty status.

This is of particular importance at the moment as the public inquiry into Whinash wind farm is currently taking place. The application is for a large wind farm and is on land which is included in the proposed extension.

Hopefully, the decision by the Countryside Agency will strengthen the case against the wind farm, and it will certainly be of crucial importance if the wind farm goes ahead and the land is designated.

The Ramblers' Association is appearing at the public inquiry in late May.

No Countryside Update Next Month

I will be out of the office for most of June, so there will be no Countryside Update next month. If you have any questions about countryside work during that time, please contact the central office reception.

Hopefully, most enquiries will be able to be answered, however if there are urgent enquiries that need an answer before July, I will be in the office on the 16th and 17th June to answer phone calls (emails won't receive an answer until July).