

Government to accelerate development of renewable energy in Scotland

The Scottish Government will respond to rising gas prices and the instability caused by the Russian invasion with a swing to renewable energy.

Net Zero and Energy Secretary, Michael Matheson, will address the Scottish Renewables Offshore Wind Conference on Tuesday saying that a more consistent and stable form of energy supply is needed in the future.

The government recognises the need to accelerate a transition to offshore wind and hydrogen,

Mr Matheson is expected to say: “I am acutely aware that, right now, families and households across Scotland are facing rising energy costs alongside high inflation. It is why we need a more consistent and stable form of energy supply. The current highly unpredictable nature of gas and oil prices add to the imperative to accelerate the development of alternative sources of energy.

“Scotland has among the richest renewable energy producing potential in the whole of Europe – but is unfairly penalised when it comes to the transmission charges applied, giving a direct disincentive to producers and investors.

“In Scotland, nearly 100% of our net electricity demand

already comes from renewable sources and we are focused on reducing energy demand and accelerating the deployment of renewable energy.

“The recent outcome of the ScotWind leasing round was a tremendous vote of confidence in Scotland’s growing offshore renewables sector. The level of ambition shown by the market recognises the seriousness of Scotland’s commitment to achieving our net zero targets and sustainable economic growth.

“ScotWind is by far the world’s largest commercial round for floating offshore wind and breaks new ground in putting large-scale floating wind technology on the map at GW scale.

“There is a bright future for the energy sector in Scotland, and for a revitalised North Sea, in supporting our transition to a net-zero energy system. The Scottish Government will do everything in its control to ensure that we deliver on that vision.”

At the Scottish Labour Party conference at the weekend, Colin Smyth criticised The Scottish Government for selling off the licences in what he described as a “botched deal”. He also called upon the government to ring fence the proceeds of the Scotwind deal to invest in the infrastructure needed to ensure a jobs first transition for the energy sector. Labour claim that the number of green jobs fell to 20,500 despite the government’s pledge to increase the number to 130,000 by 2020.

Mr Smith said: “Just weeks after they sank plans for a publicly owned Scottish energy firm, the SNP leased Scotland’s sea beds entirely to private overseas-owned firms.

“They’ve sold out Scotland’s energy on the cheap to big multi-nationals with questionable human rights records.

“Instead of investing in building’s Scotland’s future, the SNP want to invest in padding shareholders payouts abroad.

“So although Scotland will get none of the billions of profits, and a pitiful amount of rent, every penny the Scottish Government does receive should be ring fenced for a Scottish Renewables Fund – to invest in Scottish ports, in Scottish skills, in Scottish factories to create those supply chain jobs in Scotland

“The SNP don’t just want offshore Scotland’s wind, they want to offshore the profits from it. We cannot let them continue to offshore Scotland’s jobs.

“The SNP’s vision of Scotland is where we can’t make ferries, and don’t make wind turbines. Scottish Labour’s vision is of greener, jobs led future.”

Scottish Labour have also called upon the government to ensure that none of the ScotWind bidders are party to Russian money saying “Scotland’s wind must not be used to fund Putin’s war”.