

bat complaint to EU Jan 2012.

COMPLAINT TO EU COMMISSION DG-ENVIRONMENT

I wish to complain to the EU regarding the UKs approach to bat protection under the Habitats Directive. It has come to our attention that there is a very rapid development of medium sized wind turbine installations, promoted with UK government financial incentives for generous tariffs for 20 year schemes. The turbines, the most lucrative being promoted are up to 100 metres high with blades with a footprint over 30 metres across and with around 250 KW output. These are being placed at locations, and will be placed in their hundreds over the next 5 years at places including coastal locations and ancient countryside in England where protected bird and bat species will be killed in unsustainable numbers.

The problem is that the UK has not taken measures to properly research the mortality of bats and that the preliminary results of research show that many more bats are flying at high altitudes at the same levels of the ground as the turbine blades and will be killed. Bats are killed and injured by barotrauma when they pass behind turbines and do not have to be hit by the blades but have their internal organs ruptured which kills them.

Although moving wind turbines away from hedges helps, many bat flight lines occur in open areas and these are being greatly underestimated or the mortality effect ignored if it has been reduced as much as possible. The UK is unlawfully allowing planning authorities just to position wind turbines in the best site for each property rather than zoning suitable areas for turbines in areas that have been properly studied or that are shown not to be used significantly bats. This is the result of insufficient surveillance (Article 11) work.

The UK needs to put a ban on all new turbine projects until this has been done which would take about two years and produce regional bat distribution/sensitivity maps showing good and bad zones for turbines in the UK. The UK is in breach of Articles 10-16 in this matter. The same is the case for birds under the Birds Directive – the UK has not monitored adequately and produced sensitivity maps of sufficient competence to guide local authorities and Defra has not intervened. I wish to complain on the same grounds.

The turbines overall are so small that the outputs from large wind farms offshore make them effectively meaningless in terms of climate change yet damaging to flying wildlife in breach of the Habitats Directive. Other forms of energy generation such as photo-voltaic are more appropriate.

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