

# Operational Note and Press Release from Rt Hon Owen Paterson MP

Mr Paterson will deliver the following speech on Wednesday evening.

**Title:** The Global Warming Policy Foundation Annual Lecture "Keeping the Lights On"

**Venue:** No 1, Birdcage Walk, London, SW1H 9JJ

**Date and time:** 7pm, Wednesday October 15, 2014

All media invited

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

'Widely exaggerated' climate change predictions dictating energy policy, says former Cabinet minister Owen Paterson.

In his keynote speech to the Global Warming Policy Foundation, former Cabinet Minister Owen Paterson will highlight recent studies and temperature records that pour cold water on many of the most alarmist predictions levied by the climate change lobby.

Mr Paterson will state, "I readily accept the main points of the greenhouse theory. Other things being equal, carbon dioxide emissions will produce some warming. The question always has been: how much? On that there is considerable uncertainty."

He warns against inaccurate climate models that have predicted global warming: "Over the past 35 years, the earth's atmosphere has warmed "nothing like as fast" as forecast and over the last 18 years it has not warmed at all, according to some sources."

"Many policymakers have still to catch up with the facts," Mr Paterson will say, "I also note that the forecast effects of climate change have been consistently and widely exaggerated thus far."

In an intervention that makes him the most senior British politician to openly challenge the groupthink driving energy policy, Mr Paterson will argue that latest evidence must be included when it comes to formulating policy on something as essential as energy.

However, he will say he retains an open mind that climate change may become dangerous and that it would be good to cut emissions as long as safeguards are met.

Instead, the former Cabinet minister will argue that Government energy and environment policies risk turning out the lights within a generation. He will call for the suspension of the Climate Change Act, and if internationally binding legal agreements are not achieved then ultimately its repeal. Mr Paterson explores a

completely new mix of energy generation that could meet emissions targets and energy requirements. He will explore four possible technologies:

- promotion of indigenous shale gas
- large scale localised Combined Heat and Power (CHP)
- small modular nuclear reactors
- rational demand management

He will warn that the 2050 target of cutting emissions by 80 per cent requires in a mere 36 years the almost complete decarbonisation of electricity supply. To hit the 80 per cent target, according to the technology favoured by the European Commission, Britain will have to scrap virtually all electricity generation from gas and coal and eliminate natural gas from most homes.

Two thirds of private cars will have to be electric to meet the target.

This will require a huge shift to renewable, mainly wind, energy, with at least two thirds of electricity generation coming from wind turbines.

"This is a point that is little understood. The 2050 target commits us to a huge expansion of electricity generation capacity, requiring vast investment."

But the costs of such a move are so huge as to render it impossible.

"Even if it were forthcoming, the scale of the turbine building programme required is so great that it could not be achieved.

"Wind capacity in the EU 27 must rise from 83 GW (about 42,000 turbines) in 2010 to 984 GW (nearly 500,000 wind turbines) in 2050. And to produce that utterly implausible net increase it will be necessary to replace the older wind turbines as they reach the end of their distressingly short economic lives.

"There, at the heart of the Commission's "high RES" decarbonisation policy, is the fatal flaw. At any practical level, the "high RES" decarbonisation programme cannot be achieved. It simply will not happen. Yet, as far as EU policy goes, this is considered the most promising option, and one on which considerable development resource has already been expended."

The UK Government has recognised the impracticality of the Commission scheme and proposed a different energy mix making greater use of nuclear power, Mr Paterson will say.

But its approach is equally unrealistic since it will require the equivalent of a new Hinkley Point nuclear power station every three years. The nuclear plant given approval last week will take at least 10 years to bring on stream.

Mr Paterson will also highlight the cost to consumers of renewable subsidies to

producers.

"It amazes me that our last three energy secretaries, Ed Miliband, Chris Huhne and Ed Davey, who all purport to be in favour of helping the poor and not the rich, have merrily presided over the single most regressive policy we have seen in this country since the Sheriff of Nottingham: the coerced increase of poor people's electricity bills to pay huge subsidies to wealthy landowners and rich investors.

"It is a policy that is nowhere near achieving its objectives and its cost is rising, not falling.

"So what I am proposing is that instead of investing huge sums in wind power, we should encourage investment in four possible common sense policies: shale gas, combined heat and power, small modular nuclear reactors and demand management. That would reduce emissions rapidly, without risking power cuts, and would be affordable.

"What's stopping this programme? Simply, the 2050 target is."

"Paradoxically, in order to cut emissions significantly, we must formally abandon the 2050 targets, which are taking us to a dead end of high cost, high risk -- and high emissions.

"The huge problem with 80 per cent decarbonisation, apart from the fact that it cannot be achieved, is that it is an all-or-nothing strategy which does not leave any openings for alternatives.

"It requires very specific technology, such as supposedly "zero carbon" windfarms, and electric vehicles. Interim solutions, such as high-efficiency, low-emission coal-generating plants, installed to reach interim targets, then become dead-end technology: no matter how energy efficient they are, they can never be "zero carbon", so they must be replaced well before 2050.

"Furthermore, because "zero carbon" technology is capital intensive, the drive to meet the 2050 target blocks investment in more modest but feasible and affordable low carbon options.

"Thus, in pursuing the current decarbonisation route, we end up with the worst of all possible worlds. If there is a shortfall in electricity production, emergency measures will have to be taken, or what in Whitehall is known as "distressed policy correction" - bluntly, building gas or even coal in a screaming hurry. The UK ends up worse off than if it adopted less ambitious but achievable targets. Reining in unrealistic green ambitions is to become more "green" than the Greens.

"To summarise, blind adherence to the 2050 targets will not reduce emissions and will fail to keep the lights on. A proper common sense policy would free up the market to enable the promotion of indigenous shale gas, large scale localized CHP, small

modular nuclear reactors and rational demand management meanwhile reinvigorating the freedom of the science and business communities to explore new technologies.

"Let us hope we have an opportunity to put it into practice. We must be prepared to stand up to the bullies in the environmental movement and their subsidy-hungry allies."

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Notes to Editors:

Mr Paterson will give the annual lecture "Keeping the Lights On" to The Global Warming Policy Foundation on Wednesday, 15 October 2014 at 7pm  
Venue: No 1, Birdcage Walk, London, SW1H 9JJ

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