

UK's Wind Power Gamble Ends in Power Supply Bankruptcy

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Until David Cameron's Conservatives took full control of the UK Parliament, Britain had lumped every last chip on wind power: apparently hoping that a wholly weather dependent power source, that requires 100% of its capacity to be backed up 100% of the time by conventional ([dispatchable](#)) power sources, would come up trumps and lead to oodles of secure, reliable and affordable electricity.

After more than just a few spins of the energy wheel, it seems that Britain is blessed with the punter's curse: a dwindling bag of cash and no hope of better 'luck' anywhere in sight.

Government energy policy will hike bills and lead to power supply gap

The Northern Echo

Sandy Richardson

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DAVID Cameron's decision to close coal-fired electricity stations and scale back nuclear investment will lead to massive power shortages and hike energy bills over the next decade, industry leaders have warned.

Growing electricity demand will leave the UK facing a 40 per cent to 55 per cent electricity supply gap, according to a new report by the Institution of Mechanical Engineers.

It says plans to plug the gap by building Combined Cycle Gas Turbine (CCGT) plants are unrealistic, as the UK would need to build about 30 such plants in less than 10 years.

The UK has built just four CCGTs in the last 10 years, closed one as well as eight other power stations. In 2005 twenty nuclear sites were listed for decommissioning, leaving a significant gap to be filled.

According to the report, the country has neither the resources nor enough people with the right skills to build this many power stations in time. It is already too late for any other nuclear reactors to be planned and built by the coal shut-off target of 2025, other than Hinkley Point C.

The report also highlights that a greater reliance on imported electricity from Scandinavia and the Continent is likely to lead to higher electricity costs and leave Britain at the mercy of foreign suppliers.

Dr Jenifer Baxter, Head of Energy and Environment at the Institution of Mechanical Engineers, and Lead Author of the report said:

"The UK is facing an electricity supply crisis. As the UK population rises and with the greater use of electricity use in transport and heating it looks almost certain that electricity demand is going to rise.

"However with little or no focus on reducing electricity demand, the retirement of the majority of the country's ageing nuclear fleet, recent proposals to phase out coal-fired power by 2025 and the cut in renewable energy subsidies, the UK is on course to produce even less electricity than it does at the moment.

"Currently there are insufficient incentives for companies to invest in any sort of electricity infrastructure or innovation and worryingly even the Government's own energy calculator does not allow for the scenarios that new energy policy points towards. Under current policy, it is almost impossible for UK electricity demand to be met by 2025.

"Government needs to take urgent action to work with industry to create a clear pathway with time frames and milestones for new electricity infrastructure to be built including fossil fuel plants, nuclear power, energy storage and combined heat and power. With CCS now out of the picture, new low carbon innovations must be supported over the course of the next 10 years."

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