



Caithness Windfarm Information Forum

www.caithnesswindfarms.co.uk

Press Release for immediate publication

Today Caithness Windfarm Information Forum (CWIF) launches a commissioned report into

“The Safety Aspects of The Highland Council’s Practice of Placing Small Wind Turbines in School Playgrounds”

<http://www.caithnesswindfarms.co.uk/SchoolsReport.htm>

Headline Findings

The key findings of a report by Stuart Young Consulting are:

- **An independent expert review of the safety of putting wind turbines on school premises is essential.**
- Current control measures require head teachers to leave the classroom and venture forth to take windspeed readings and shut down turbines in Hurricane Force wind speeds when “*debris and unsecured objects are hurled about*”.
- Highland Council recommend exclusion zones for safety reasons - e.g. fall, topple, ejection - but none seem to have been provided.
- Turbines are to be allowed to operate in winds up to 107mph - “tropical cyclone levels”.
- The risk posed to head teachers through implementing Highland Council safety measures would be even greater than the risk posed to pupils by the turbines themselves.
- Highland Council embarked on a strategy of placing turbines in school playgrounds without a policy and without a risk assessment.
- On the Risk Assessment Matrix a scale of 1 to 3 for likelihood with 1 being “Very unlikely” is a very blunt instrument when the possible consequence of an event is the death of a child.
- Highland Council believes that halving the maintenance intervals leaves a zero residual risk of catastrophic mechanical failure. Logic and experience do not support this belief.
- Available evidence of small turbine failures points to a precautionary approach which Highland Council ignores.
- There is already evidence in Scotland that catastrophic turbine failures occur with consequent violent debris ejection. It cannot be ignored.

- “The fact that almost half a million pounds had been spent before a policy was developed or risk assessment undertaken may suggest a reason for the continuing practice of placing wind turbines in school playgrounds”.
- The report finds that *“if Highland Council had formulated a policy for turbines in school playgrounds and subjected it to rigorous risk assessment, informed by observation and experience, these turbines would almost certainly have not been installed”*.

The report was carried out by Caithness consultant Stuart Young whose [2010 Analysis of UK Wind Power Generation](#) created international headlines when it exposed for the first time the true inefficiency of windfarm output.

NOTES FOR EDITORS

Highland Council, like other councils and schools all over the UK, has been installing turbines in school playgrounds **with no regard for the safety of children and teachers, or indeed visiting parents**. This has prompted CWIF to look into the safety aspects and a copy of the report has been sent to their Chief Executive, Alistair Dodds.

There is an assumption, mainly propagated by the wind industry, that turbines are “safe” despite the many and regular incidents proving otherwise. Not only have there been frequent failures of turbines, resulting in parts being thrown considerable distances or complete tower collapse, reported in the Press, a number of these have been in school playgrounds and only the chance absence of children at the time has prevented serious injury or death. Luck is not normally a major factor when carrying out risk assessments associated with fast spinning machinery.

It is also obvious from reports received that many turbine failures do not reach the media so the true risk of failure is not known and neither the wind industry, the Health & Safety Executive, nor Governments keep accurate records. Nearly every time an incident is reported, the industry describes it as “rare”.

These turbines are installed primarily to make money and secondly to influence children into believing they are saving the planet. When they cease to operate for any reason, it is loss of income that appears to be the main concern. Safety of children takes second place.

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