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Press release | 24.06.2015

UK Nuclear Subsidy in the EU dock

Press release from EFA MEP Alyn Smith (SNP)

Scottish Member of the European Parliament **Alyn Smith** and SNP Westminster Energy Spokesperson Callum McCaig MP have today (Wednesday) welcomed the announcement from the Austrian government that it will formally challenge the UK proposed subsidy regime for a new nuclear power station at Hinkley Point.

The Austrian government will lodge a formal complaint with the European Court of Justice on Monday alleging that the proposed subsidy for the plant is against EU state aid rules and a distortion of competition. It is unconfirmed but likely that the Luxembourg government will support the case.



Alyn Smith MEP said:

"The UK government's nuclear obsession is bad for taxpayers, bad for consumers and bad for Scotland. This old expensive dangerous technology is simply not fit for purpose, especially when Scotland is blessed with such abundant natural resources we are in the process of turning to energy production. Scotland can be Europe's clean green powerhouse but in the initial phases the investment must be underpinned by certainty of the subsidy regime.

"I spent the best part of ten years on the European Parliament's Energy committee working to highlight the benefits of renewables and interconnected EU markets, the UK never once played ball. Prior to our independence referendum I took the view that such decisions were a matter for the UK, but so long as Scotland remains part of the UK then these are our taxes too.

"The UK seeking to favour nuclear at our expense is bad news, and as far as I can see in breach of EU law – it is a shockingly bad deal for Scottish and UK taxpayers, and I do not want to see Scottish taxes squandered in this way when we could be supporting the energy technologies of the future, in Scotland. The numbers involved in this project are eye-watering, with some €31.2billion just to build the thing and a guaranteed (by UK taxpayers) rate of GBP92.50 per megawatt hour for 35 years! This is the blankest of blank cheques.

"Good on the Austrians, a legal challenge will shine a bright light onto this murky decision, and indeed the murky approval by the European Commission of a remarkable subsidy. I have today written to the Austrian Chancellor to express my support."

Callum McCaig MP said:

"The SNP government in Scotland has set some of the most ambitious climate change targets in the world, and backed renewables in all their forms as our contribution to the global challenge of climate change but also as a basis for the reindustrialisation of Scotland. We oppose nuclear as an outdated expensive unsafe technology.

"After the recent UK election, the SNP is in a position of unprecedented influence in Westminster, and we oppose this deal. I'm delighted like minded European friends are assisting in the public scrutiny of this poor contract, and we will waste no opportunity at Westminster to publicise and scrutinise this poor deal. In the very week the UK government has threatened to cut renewables support it is all the more important that this massive energy subsidy is publicised."

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