



PRESS RELEASE

DTI DITHERS AS RENEWABLES INDUSTRY SEEKS URGENT ANSWERS

Trade associations representing the renewable micro-generation industry have together slammed the Government over its new grants programme. The DTI Clear Skies and Solar Photovoltaics (PV) grant programmes began over three years ago, but are due to be replaced by the Low Carbon Buildings Programme this April.

The REA has written to Energy Minister Malcolm Wicks warning that the fund for household grants is being cut by two-thirds and it is still not clear what technologies it will cover.

Companies are suffering during the hiatus caused by the changeover as prospective customers are delaying orders until the new grants programme is available and cash flows are being affected. The DTI's delay in announcing the programme means that companies are unable to plan their businesses, and jobs are under threat.

"Grant payments have been seriously delayed. Some payments for PV installations are still outstanding from December last year. We've already paid for and installed these systems so that creates a major cash flow problem for us," said Sean Cavendish of Sunpowered Energy Systems Limited.

John Blower, Chairman of the Solar Trade Association commented "The changeover to what promises to be a poorly funded programme is damaging our industry at a time when the Government should be helping to stimulate the market for renewable energy equipment."

"Currently microgeneration is seeing a huge surge of interest, which BWEA welcomes. However, the lack of continuity between Clear Skies and the LCBP is symptomatic of policy which is big on talk but fails to deliver the resources required to fuel the growth of these exciting industries. If we are to avoid microgeneration being a passing fad, Government must close this gaping chasm between rhetoric and action," said Mairi Martiskainen of the BWEA.

Seb Berry Head of Micro Renewables for the REA said: "We have been warning DTI for more than a year about what would happen if the shift from Clear Skies and solar PV programmes to the Low Carbon Buildings Programme was mishandled. This situation makes business planning impossible for our member firms and is threatening jobs in the sector. It is also sending all the wrong signals to home owners and others who want to do their bit in the fight against climate change."

--ENDS--

Notes to editors

British Wind Energy Association

BWEA represents over 300 companies active in the wind energy and marine renewables sector. It recently launched a one-stop shop for small wind, details can be found on <http://www.bwea.com/media/news/060315.html>

0207 689 1935 Mari Martiskainen, Communications and Small Wind Officer, BWEA

The Solar Trade Association

The Solar Trade Association Ltd. (STA) is a company limited by guarantee, having been formed in 1978 to serve as a focal point for organisations with business interests in the Solar Energy industry. The STA has over 60 members.

07957 364558 John Blower, Chair Solar Trade Association

The Renewable Energy Association

The REA is a trade association whose members are active in all fields of renewable energy. It has a membership of over 420 companies. The REA is currently consulting on a draft code of practice for suppliers of generation equipment to domestic consumers. Details can be found on http://www.r-e-a.net/article_flat.fcm?articleid=20

07949 208187 Seb Berry, Head of Micro-Renewables, REA

Sunpowered Energy Systems Ltd

Sunpowered Energy Systems Ltd specialises in the installation and distribution of PV, solar thermal and wind systems

023 9261 4925 Sean Cavendish MD of Sunpowered Energy Systems Ltd.