
CONFERENCE PAPERS

Is Renewable Energy really going to be better than coal, gas and nuclear?

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Outline

It is generally agreed that Sustainable Development is the key issue of the 21st Century, but are we really able to cost the alternative strategies and what position should progressives be supporting?

Possible catastrophe scenarios point to the enormous cost of global warming if these turn out to be true. Sea level rises might lead to an event like the flooding of New Orleans happening somewhere in the world every day by 2080.

Nevertheless, at present, renewable energy generally appears to be more expensive to produce than coal, gas and nuclear. Except some people argue that the clean up and de-commissioning costs of nuclear are always under-estimated.

Affordable energy is essential for development so governments must be careful to maintain reasonably priced electricity and transport so that their industries can compete abroad. Most experts agree that we are only one or two decades away from peak oil output and millions of new car drivers are being created each year.

Energy security, however, is now the number one priority of government energy policy after recent power outages around the world.

At present then government incentives are creating new drivers pushing everybody towards renewables and sustainability, but market forces and technological advances are still probably the biggest influences on most decision makers from the top to the bottom.

Are there any surprises out there? Any new technologies that may help mankind to fix the global warming problem?

Fuel cells and Carbon capture and storage will be discussed briefly, but New Tidal will be laid out in more detail in the presentation.

Finally, can we say anything about the relation of specific ways of providing energy to the rent of land?