

Revolt news 296 of 14-3-10

Revolt news 296 of 14-3-10 and other issues are sent bcc and free. To subscribe or unsubscribe, simply email or use the contact at the Revolt web site. Email addresses which fail for three consecutive issues will be removed in any case. For further information please see

<<http://www.revolt.co.uk/>>.

Statements made by the editor or by other parties and quoted for information do not necessarily represent the views of Revolt. Criticism of government and industry, and grievances from members of the public, are in the nature of Revolt's work, though we try to give credit where it is due. Revolt is strictly non-party-political and regrets any offence which may be inadvertently caused.

1. Further to Stour Valley Underground's response (news295.8), another group Bury Not Blight has distributed its consultation response to NG's proposed Bramford-Twinstead 400kV line in Suffolk and Essex. The BNB response argues for buried cables instead of an overhead line.

2. The "award winning Tyrella Beach and conservation area" looks like one of the most beautiful spots and amenities in the Lecale AONB in Northern Ireland. Yet the government department DOENI proposes to revoke its AONB status, while newly granting such status to an Asda car park and a Macdonald's take-away. Hidden agenda? There is talk of an offshore wind farm and pylons to carry the power overland. Follow the AONB issues and video clip at

<http://www.downgreens.com/?cat=63>

http://www.ni-environment.gov.uk/strangford_aonb_2009.pdf-3.pdf

3. The IPCC (yes, the one about climate change not the one about police complaints) is to be reviewed this year by the Inter-Academy Council, which brings together the world's national science academies. The review will consider process; sources and data; range of views; and communication with media and the public.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/8561004.stm>

4. In my view the IPCC assessment process is quite good, in the structured way it deals with uncertainty. It's much better than ICNIRP, HPA and IARC in their approach to EMF, although the WHO-EHC238 was an improvement. The problem is with people, and with personnel processes. There are issues of structural dependence and social networking (as described in the Wegman report); partisan zeal such as that exposed in the "climategate" emails does not help science or public trust in science. I do wonder whether public trust in science is a misplaced objective – open-mindedness is a better scientific position than trust – and we should surely beware public trust in scientists, especially establishment scientists.

5. The March 2010 issue of *People and Science* (magazine of the British Science Association) has an article by Lord Krebs on the David Nutt affair. Krebs speaks positively of the British system of scientific advice to government. He summarises the principles of *Guidelines on Scientific Advice and Policymaking* maintained by the

<http://www.revolt.co.uk/>

Revolt news 296 of 14-3-10

Government Chief Scientific Adviser (GCSA) neatly as: “advice should be open and transparent, take into account a wide range of expert opinion, and acknowledge uncertainties”. Krebs adds it should be the job of the GCSA, not ministers, to judge and maintain impartiality of advice. The problem with the Nutt affair was that the drugs advisory committee was charged with advising on political decisions, including ranges of prison sentences for offenders. Asking for such final advice is asking for trouble, confusing what is science, what is expert and what is politics (news284, 290 etc).

6. Also in the March 2010 issue of *People and Science*, quote from ex MP Dr Ian Gibson: “My experience of policy-formation is that scientists are walked all over by politicians whose tactics and motivation are accurately illustrated by the TV programme, *In the thick of it*. It should be compulsory viewing for every undergraduate and research scientist. Ian was Chair of the Commons Science and Technology Committee 2001-2005. The article was about campaigning for research into the serious decline of the bee population.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bee#Depopulation>

7. An interesting deal has been struck in Sussex County, New Jersey. Fredon School was scheduled to close last October due to officials’ concerns about high EMFs from a long-existing 230kV powerline directly over the playground. Temporary arrangements were made at the school while negotiations went on. The utility PSE&G has agreed to move the 230kV line some 400 feet further away from the school, and to pay for reconfiguring the school grounds, in return for the school board and a local parents group PALS dropping their opposition to a new 500kV line alongside the 230kV line. That 500kV multi-state project is worth some \$750 million.

http://www.nj.com/news/index.ssf/2010/03/fredon_school_expected_to_unde.html

8. The dangers of agreeing permanent easements! A family with small children on a banana plantation in northern Queensland, Australia, is worried about powerline developments close to their home. The family says an easement is forced on them against their wishes. Voluntary easements do tend to be “binding on successors” (new owners of the property). Landowners should be careful to restrict any permanent easements to the existing development only.

9. In the Queensland case above the utility is state corporation Powerlink. There are procedures for “easement acquisition” under a 1967 Act, which may not be voluntary, but do carry compensation. Powerlink has a policy of prudent avoidance on EMF (credit to them for that) which includes avoiding locating transmission lines near homes, schools and community facilities where possible.

<http://www.powerlink.com.au/>

<http://www.revolt.co.uk/>