

While our major global competitors - the USA, China, India - are switching to low-cost fossil fuels, we are forced to close perfectly good coal-fired power stations to meet unattainable targets for renewable capacity. If we carry on like this, the lights are likely to go out.

Why? Because the 2008 Climate Change Act, an Act rooted in EU folly, drives up costs, undermines competitiveness and hits jobs and growth. Dubbed 'the most expensive piece of legislation in British history,' the government's own figures put the cost of the Act at £18 billion a year over 40 years, or £720 billion between 2010 and 2050.

The Climate Change Act is doing untold damage. UKIP will repeal it.

We will also scrap the Large Combustion Plant Directive and stop the EU's planned Medium Combustion Plant Directive. Both attempt to close down secure, reliable and economical electricity generation and replace it with expensive, intermittent, unreliable renewables. We will encourage the re-development of British power stations and industrial units providing on-site power generation.

To deliver secure, affordable energy supplies, we support a diverse energy market based on coal, nuclear, shale gas, conventional gas, oil, solar and hydro, as well as other renewables where these can be delivered at competitive prices.

SHALE GAS: TIME TO GET 'FRACKING'

UKIP supports the development of shale gas, provided safeguards are in place to protect local communities and the environment. Community Infrastructure Levy income from shale gas operations will be earmarked for lower Council Taxes or local community projects.

No energy extraction technology is perfectly safe, but shale gas operations in the USA for instance, where tens of thousands of shale wells have been drilled and fracked over five decades, have proved remarkably unproblematic, especially so by comparison to other methods of energy extraction.

What is clearly unsafe is the UK's over-dependence on imports from politically unstable countries. In the interests of energy security alone, the prospect of home-grown shale gas is an enormous opportunity it would be irresponsible to ignore.

We will levy Petroleum Revenue Tax (currently 50 per cent) on any shale profits and invest the income into a Sovereign Wealth Fund. Norway takes this approach, with great success.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

UKIP supports and will invest in renewables, where they can deliver electricity at competitive prices. At the moment, the only major renewable technology that meets this test for affordability is hydro, so we will withdraw taxpayer and consumer subsidies for new wind turbines and solar photovoltaic arrays, while respecting existing contractual arrangements.

Wind power is hopelessly inefficient and wind farms rely heavily on reserve back-up from conventional power sources. They have blighted landscapes and put money into the pockets of wealthy landowners and investors, while pushing up bills for the rest of us.

INVESTING IN COAL

The British coal industry once employed one million miners. Now, all three remaining deep coal mines in Britain are set to close by 2016, at a cost of 2,000 jobs, despite having many years of productive life left and regardless of our continuing need for coal. 30 per cent of our electricity is still produced from coal and we will be dependent on fossil fuels for many more years to come.

If we are to have energy security and cheap, plentiful, reliable sources of energy, coal must be part of the solution.

Bearing this in mind, UKIP will:

- Set up a commission to investigate ways to assist and rejuvenate the coal industry
- Seek to secure the survival and expansion of our indigenous coal industry in the form of deep, opencast and drift mining
- Drop all subsidies for wind and solar power, to ensure a level playing field for coal
- Discontinue the carbon floor tax on the basis that production for coal fired power stations is combined with carbon capture and storage
- Halt the decline of coal power stations and seek private funding to develop new, efficient plants.

CUTTING FUEL BILLS

In 2014, the government forced energy companies to add nearly £3.2 billion onto energy bills to finance their energy and climate change policies: that will have doubled to a staggering £9.8 billion by 2020, amounting to an extra £197 going onto our average domestic fuel bills.

UKIP will abolish green taxes and levies and withdraw from the EU's Emissions Trading Scheme, reducing fuel bills and enhancing industrial competitiveness at a stroke.

We will also make the way you pay your bill fairer, by stopping energy companies charging extra for customers who use prepayment meters, who do not pay by direct debit, or who require paper billing.

BELIEVE *in* BRITAIN