Advertisement



Give abused and neglected children a voice.
Yours.

Energy industry

Why are energy firms U-turning on green agenda now?

Lobbying group has been on wrong side of carbon debate for far too long, so should we really believe that this is more than just words?

Terry Macalister
Energy editor
@TerryMac999

Sunday 28 February 2016
13.59 GMT

Shares 122 Comments 156

Save for later



'Since the Tories took full control of the energy agenda there has been a bonfire of much-needed subsidies for wind and solar.' Photograph: Alamy

The decision by Britain's most powerful energy lobby group to take a positive stance on building a low-carbon economy is a significant moment.

It gives major impetus to the green agenda just as it is being undermined by influential sceptics inside the Conservative party, Treasury and Department of Energy and Climate Change.

Since the Tories took full control of the energy agenda in spring last year there has been a bonfire of much-needed subsidies for wind and solar, using the excuse of customer "affordability".

The comment from Lawrence Slade, the boss of Energy UK, that he believes Britain needs an *Energiewende* (German low-carbon energy transformation) is like holding up garlic to the vampires on the Tory backbenches who have been pushing for a go-slow on everything green.



Top lobbying group in historic green energy U-turn

Read more

Slade has not just made a few loose comments. He has produced a significant report, Pathways to 2030, undertaken with the help of accountants KPMG, about the need to help renewables, reduce energy demand and move away fast from some fossil fuels.

But do we believe this is more that just words? Has it really got the support of all his members? And why the U-turn now?

In the end these are indeed just words on a page and do not, for instance, commit companies to build much-needed power stations: British Gas parent Centrica admitted recently that it had zero investment in new plants.

As a statement of intent though, it is very important even if, as Slade has hinted, not every one of his members supports it as strongly as others.

The change in attitude is probably due to several factors: the Paris climate change talks; new personnel (Slade took over recently from the "traditionalist" former Conservative minister Angela Knight and Centrica has swapped its boss too); and a realisation that Energy UK has been on the wrong side of a carbon argument for too long.

Will it stop the big six overcharging retail customers or other abuses? No. Is it an important step for the industry? Yes.

This article was amended on 28 February 2016 to correct the spelling of *Energiewende*.

More analysis | Topics | Energy industry | Energy | Green economy | Lobbying

Save for later | Reuse this content

Advertisement

FXopen
TRADE WITH
A REPUTABLE BROKER
Learn More

Most popular



Super Tuesday live: Trump and Clinton romp as Cruz and Sanders each win two



Super Tuesday results: track the votes live, state by state



Crisis for Republican party as Trump heads for Super Tuesday victory



Trump marches toward nomination as Clinton sweeps south on Super Tuesday



Sacha Baron Cohen: Oscars appearance as Ali G was against Academy's orders

related content



Top lobbying group in historic green energy U-turn
28 Feb 2016 812



Energy UK: time to rethink 'green' power policies in Brussels
2 Jun 2014 207



Government urged to cut cash to green energy in order to reduce bills
16 Dec 2013



Dong Energy upbeat about offshore wind power thanks to higher subsidy
8 Dec 2013

UK green energy sector suffers double blow
4 Oct 2012 44

PM under pressure from own cabinet to boost green energy investment
24 Jun 2012 31

Leaked documents reveal UK fight to dilute EU green energy targets
3 Jun 2012 240

Energy companies have lent more than 50 staff to government departments
5 Dec 2011 93

promoted links from around the web
Recommended by Outbrain



"Worlds Brightest" Military Grade Flashlight Now Available To Public
VIR3



Two superpowers to change the world
BILL GATES



You'll Never Look At Cars The Same Way Again
HEALTH-TRENDYTASTES



20 Jaw-Dropping Civil War Facts, #11 Will Surprise You
BOMBIST

28 Funny Notes From People Who Deserve An OSCAR For Honesty.
LIFEBUZZ

Why we need an energy miracle
BILL GATES

CCS Vital For Bridging the Gap
GLOBAL CARBON CAPTURE AND STORAGE INSTITUTE

5 Bootstrapping Strategies Every Startup Should Be Using
UNUSUAL BUSINESS IDEAS THAT WORK

Outbrain
About this Content

comments (156)

Sign in or create your Guardian account to join the discussion.

Order by Newest | Threads Collapsed | 1 2 3

gazz5746 2h ago 0

Something to do with £££££££££££££££££££

Reply | Report

onetimeonly 15h ago 1

Please keep in mind that big energy is in favour of big offshore windparks, which they can finance and construct and profit from.

What big energy doesn't want is private windfarms (do you have 'windfarmers' in the UK ? It's fairly common in some other countries) or solar collectors on your roof, since they don't provide corporate profits. Hence their largescale political support for NIMBY-initiatives against onshore windmills.

Reply | Report

View more comments