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Sustainable Energy - without the hot air

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Description

This is the electronic version of the book which is also available in hardback and paperback.

Abstract

We have an addiction to fossil fuels, and it's not sustainable. The developed world gets 80% of its energy from fossil fuels; Britain, 90%. And this is unsustainable for three reasons. First, easily-accessible fossil fuels will at some point run out, so we'll eventually have to get our energy from someplace else. Second, burning fossil fuels is having a measurable and very-probably dangerous effect on the climate. Avoiding dangerous climate change motivates an immediate change from our current use of fossil fuels. Third, even if we don't care

about climate change, a drastic reduction in Britain's fossil fuel consumption would seem a wise move if we care about security of supply: continued rapid use of the North Sea Photo by Terry Cavner. oil and gas reserves will otherwise soon force fossil-addicted Britain to depend on imports from untrustworthy foreigners. (I hope you can hear my tongue in my cheek.) How can we get off our fossil fuel addiction? There's no shortage of advice on how to "make a difference," but the public is confused, uncertain whether these schemes are fixes or figleaves. People are rightly suspicious when companies tell us that buying their "green" product means we've "done our bit." They are equally uneasy about national energy strategy. Are "decentralization" and "combined heat and power," green enough, for example? The government would have us think so. But would these technologies really discharge Britain's duties regarding climate change? Are windfarms "merely a gesture to prove our leaders' environmental credentials"? Is nuclear power essential? We need a plan that adds up. The good news is that such plans can be made. The bad news is that implementing them will not be easy.

Keywords

sustainable energy, renewables, carbon dioxide, fossil fuels, climate change, global warming

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