

EPGBTWB 07 - Tystiolaeth gan: Unigolyn | Evidence from: Individual

Senedd Cymru | Welsh Parliament

Pwyllgor Newid Hinsawdd, yr Amgylchedd a Seilwaith | Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure Committee

Bil yr Amgylchedd (Egwyddorion, Llywodraethiant a Thargedau Bioamrywiaeth) (Cymru) | Environment (Principles, Governance and Biodiversity Targets) (Wales) Bill

1. What are your views on the general principles of the Bill, and is there a need for legislation to deliver the stated policy intention?

These are much needed. It is essential that environmental diversity is protected and enhanced.

2. What are your views on the Bill's provisions (set out according to Parts below), in particular are they workable and will they deliver the stated policy intention?

- **Part 1 - Environmental objective and principles (sections 1 to 7)**

These are much needed. It is essential that environmental diversity is protected and enhanced.

3. What are your views on the Bill's provisions (set out according to Parts below), in particular are they workable and will they deliver the stated policy intention?

- **Part 2 - The Office of Environmental Governance Wales (sections 8 to 32 and Schedules 1, 2 and 3)**

The establishment of an overarching body for environmental governance is to be welcomed – providing that it has sufficient regulatory powers to enforce compliance from other public authorities and private stakeholders.

4. What are your views on the Bill's provisions (set out according to Parts below), in particular are they workable and will they deliver the stated policy intention?

- **Part 3 - Biodiversity targets, etc (sections 33 to 38)**

These are an excellent idea, but again, it must be clear that these apply to all major development projects, whether by public authorities or private stakeholders. Where disruption of local sites is expected, mitigation measures must be rigorously applied and monitored, with consequences for non-compliance.

5. What are your views on the Bill's provisions (set out according to Parts below), in particular are they workable and will they deliver the stated policy intention?

- **Part 4 - General (sections 39 to 45 and Schedule 4)**

Notices served must be backed up by stringent powers and significant consequences for non-compliant organisations. Penalties must be commensurate with the size and worth of the non-compliant organisation. Small fines or ineffectual warnings which have little or no operational impact should be avoided.

6. What are the potential barriers to the implementation of the Bill's provisions and how does the Bill take account of them?

There are potential conflicting interests in other Senedd targets. For example, Net Zero targets and the drive for more renewable energy production are essential, but locally they may be in direct violation of environmental diversity protections. It is counter-productive, for example, to approve very large scale onshore windfarms on environmentally sensitive areas such as ancient peat bog, curlew nesting sites, etc. There are very large multinational companies behind windfarm scheme proposals and they will not be swayed from destroying important sites unless there is sufficient regulatory protection, and significant compliance measures in place. All large scale developments must be carefully reviewed for their environmental impact and if the risks are too great, there needs to be the power to refuse permissions.

7. How appropriate are the powers in the Bill for Welsh Ministers to make subordinate legislation (as set out in Chapter 5 of Part 1 of the Explanatory Memorandum)

No comment.

8. Are any unintended consequences likely to arise from the Bill?

Extreme care must be taken to ensure that unscrupulous developers do not access and tamper with, or destroy important biodiverse sites before planning permissions are given for major projects. Where organisations are found to have done so, penalties should be severe.

9. What are your views on the Welsh Government's assessment of the financial implications of the Bill as set out in Part 2 of the Explanatory Memorandum?

No comment.

10. Are there any other issues that you would like to raise about the Bill and the accompanying Explanatory Memorandum or any related matters?

The Senedd must agree a common sense approach to balancing environmental diversity, quality of life, and the need to reduce carbon emissions and clean energy generation. It is essential to recognise that any major industrial development has a significant negative impact, even if the end goal is to improve clean energy production and use. Small scale, localised energy generation can be a far more effective and less impactful approach, rather than huge generation schemes operated for profit by multinational companies.
