

Onshore wind 'ban' could cost £1 billion

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The government's reluctance around onshore wind could cost the UK £1 billion over the next four or five years, according to a new report. The report published today by the Energy and Climate Change Intelligence Unit (ECIU) claims the UK is missing out on onshore wind, which is cheaper than offshore wind, nuclear and biomass plants. It claims 1GW of new onshore wind would cost £30 million per year less than offshore wind and £100 million less than a new nuclear or biomass plant.

The report estimates that the continued policy block around onshore wind could cost the UK £1 billion over the next four to five years, compared to using other forms of energy. It adds the numbers are based on the turbine technology which is currently available and "almost certainly an under-estimate" as turbines are becoming more efficient. The report also points to onshore auctions this year across Europe, which have seen prices clear as low as €43/Mwh.

"In both Spanish and German auctions, there was a backlog of pent-up demand, as there is currently in the UK, and bidders were able to take advantage of the latest technology on the market," the report states.

It also cites a study by the [Bright Blue think tank](#), published earlier this year, which shows 59 per cent of Conservative voters now back onshore wind, providing local communities have their say and there is no subsidy. The ECIU's director, Richard Black, said the government's "effective ban" on onshore wind "looks increasingly perverse".

"For a Government committed to making energy cheaper, this risks not only locking people into higher bills, but also runs contrary to its aim of having the lowest energy costs in Europe," said Black. *"These blustery isles have no shortage of wind and while other European nations are going large on onshore wind the UK is starting to fall behind by not making the most of our natural resource."*

Earlier this month, it was confirmed the National Infrastructure Commission is examining "unnecessary barriers" to the deployment of onshore wind projects, highlighting how they do not benefit from subsidies like their offshore counterparts. RenewableUK's executive director, Emma Pinchbeck said: *"Onshore wind is the cheapest source of new power, bar none. If Government wants to cap energy bills, we need a market that lets the lowest cost options compete. Having seen the record-breaking fall in the cost of offshore wind last month, we now need to discover how much the cost of onshore wind has fallen too – and that hasn't been possible because it's been excluded from competitive auctions. New onshore wind, in places where there it has public support, can help Ministers achieve their goal of making energy costs for UK consumers the lowest in Europe,"*.

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