

Listen to a radio programme in which politicians are talking about wind power farms as a possible energy source.

P = Presenter (male)

A (male politician)

B (female politician) = guests

**P:** The next question comes from a listener in Sheffield, a Mrs Thompson, and she asks ‘Do the guests think wind farms are the answer to our energy needs for the future?’ Now, if you haven’t been following the story this is obviously a reference to the government’s plans to build a huge wind farm in a national park. Alan, as a member of the government, surely you support this plan.

**A:** Well, firstly, you’ve got your facts slightly wrong there – the proposed wind farm is *not* in a national park!

**P:** Well, it’s certainly very close

**A:** But I think the main point here is that we have to do *something*. We don’t want to have to say to our children in twenty, thirty years time, ‘Well the oil has run out and we haven’t really made any plans’. Wind power offers a very real source of alternative, *renewable* energy and I think that the effect these wind farms will have on the landscape is a price well worth paying.

**P:** Barbara?

**B:** A very passionate speech Alan but you’re only telling half the story. Of course no-one would say that we shouldn’t look for alternative sources of renewable energy. The problem my party has with this wind farm is that we’re not convinced that it’s a worthwhile project. It’s expensive to build, it’s a blot on the landscape in one of the most beautiful parts of the country and, most importantly, there’s no proof it will provide as much power as the government promise it will. Our argument -

**A:** It will provide enough energy to power 1500 homes for a year.

**B:** - if the wind blows! That’s precisely the problem. It’s unreliable and -

**A:** You see, this is where we can’t win! This wind farm is planned for the windiest area in the country and you say it’ll ruin the countryside. Actually, you might be interested to hear that some of the wind farms built in Scotland have actually become tourist attractions!

**B:** I think you’ll find that those are offshore wind farms – in the sea around the Scottish coast. We’re in favour of those – they’re much more reliable in terms of how windy it is, they’re much less intrusive – they don’t destroy the countryside, *but* they cost three times more to build than onshore wind farms. We think the government wants to talk about alternative, sustainable energy sources, but they don’t really want to spend money on it.

**A:** Nonsense. If you’d read our plans you’d see -

**P:** Well, I’ll interrupt you there, Alan, with another question. An email from a listener says, “This wind farm will reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 178,000 tonnes a year. A single jumbo jet flying to Miami and back each day releases the equivalent of 520,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide a year. Should we be looking for alternative forms of energy or a more fundamental change in reducing the amount of energy we use?” Alan?