

18th June 2010

Mr John Swinney MSP  
Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Sustainable Growth  
Scottish Government  
St Andrew's House  
Regent Road  
EDINBURGH

I enclose a summary of recent American research by the Manomet Centre for Conservation Sciences. I also refer to recent Parliamentary Questions answered by Jim Mather and thank the Government for them.

The Manomet research suggests electricity from biomass creates a huge carbon debt which will only be repaid decades later from forest regrowth. It points out that biomass fuels have a carbon footprint greater than coal burning for the first decades of their use and these are the most important decades in which to get CO<sub>2</sub> reductions. Electricity from biomass would not therefore support the Scottish Government targets for defined CO<sub>2</sub> emission cuts each year between now and 2050.

I am told by a source in Forth Ports that the Scottish Government has been making very positive noises about the proposed biomass plant at Leith Docks. It is also clear from one of the Parliamentary answers I received that the Scottish Government chairs a Biomass Stakeholders Group which includes Forth Energy and the City of Edinburgh Council. I hope the Scottish Government will reconsider its enthusiasm for electricity from biomass in the light of this research as well as in response to all the other objections that have been made by local people and myself. In relation to that, I enclose a copy of a letter I wrote to the Consents Unit dated 30<sup>th</sup> March.

Finally, I note that the projected date for a decision is the second quarter of 2011. Many people will note that it delays a decision until after the forthcoming Scottish Parliamentary elections and may well wonder about the reason for that.

Yours sincerely  
Malcolm Chisholm