

Government cuts threaten 2,000 green jobs in south west

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Dramatic cuts to a key incentive for renewable energy, announced by the government today, will put at risk 2,000 skilled green jobs in the south west, according to renewable energy experts Regen SW.

The cuts are proposed in a “Consultation on the Comprehensive Review of the Feed-in Tariffs” published by the Department of Energy and Climate Change and would reduce the incentives for installing renewable energy from 12 December 2011 rather than 1 April 2012 as previously proposed.

The Feed-in Tariff was introduced in April 2010 to support renewable energy projects and has led to solar PV becoming a common sight on roofs of houses, schools and community buildings. The south west, the sunniest part of the UK, had seen over 14,500 projects installed by October 2011.

Regen’s research shows 2,000 skilled jobs have been created in the south west installing solar PV and over 380 companies are qualified to install the technology

The cuts have met with widespread dismay in the south west

Merlin Hyman, Regen chief executive, said “the speed of these changes will be very damaging to businesses that have invested in good faith to meet the growing demand for renewable energy – thousands of jobs are severely at risk”.

Merlin continued “the feed-in tariff has brought the benefits of secure and sustainable energy to thousands of homes, communities and businesses - this is a success story we should be building on, not cutting off at the knees”.

Juliet Davenport, Good Energy’s founder and CEO says: “We’re disappointed to see the Feed-in Tariff cut significantly. The real story here seems to be that due to pressure from George Osborne and the Treasury, DECC has had to cut the one scheme that gives households control over their rising energy bills.”

Jamie O’Nians, Managing Director of solar company Your Power, said: “For Your Power the impact is significant, it is difficult to see how we can continue to grow, create jobs and add value to local economy - at the beginning of the year we had a

team of 5 and now we are a team of 40. But the biggest losers from this reduction, apart from the Government's credibility, are the environment and the consumer."

Professor Stephen Frankel, chair of the Wadebridge Renewable Energy Network in Cornwall, said "we planned to install solar panels for free to local homes so benefits are retained in the area and contribute to our community fund. The cuts in FiTs mean our efforts to act upon government advice and encouragement have been for naught."

A spokesperson for Dorset County Council said "the Council had a £1million investment programme in schools planned between now and March 2012. Today's announcement has stopped the programme dead in its tracks, with around £100,000 of publicly funded pre-installation investment costs lost. There will be a knock-on effect as there now won't be sufficient confidence for the council to plan investments using other government schemes such as the Renewable Heat Incentive or the Green Deal."

Regen has launched a campaign in support of the feed-in tariff including writing to all MP's in the south west and setting up a website with guidance on how people can make their concerns heard: <http://regensw.co.uk/news/2011/10/28/fit-review>

- Ends -

Notes to Editors

The consultation can be found at:

http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/news/gb_fits/gb_fits.aspx

Interviews

To interview Merlin Hyman or any member of Regen SW, contact us on the number below.

About Regen SW

Regen SW is a leading independent, not-for-profit, centre of expertise in sustainable energy. Regen has over 180 member organisations that support its mission to enable business, local authorities, communities and other organisations to deliver ground-breaking renewable energy and energy efficiency projects with thriving local supply chains.

www.regensw.co.uk

For further information

Please contact Merlin Hyman, Regen SW on 01392 494 399 or email mhyman@regensw.co.uk