

*Trecarrell Mill
Trebullett
Launceston
Cornwall
PL15 9QE*

4th May 2022

Dear Planet Saver/Environmental Campaigner,

A Petition to save traditional watermills and the generation of 'green electricity'

With the cost of energy rising, why has the Environment Agency torpedoed the prospect of watermills and domestic scale waterpower schemes generating green electricity?

Just when we thought that the Government was beginning to see the sense of renewable energy, the Environment Agency has imposed a licence application fee of over £6000, compared with £135 ten years ago. The lowest band of fees are a significant deterrent to projects producing up to 15 kilowatts, but are catastrophic for smaller domestic projects of around 5 kW, where the fees could easily amount to more than the equipment cost. The Environment Agency 'admits that this will make smaller projects uneconomic'.

The imposition of such high fees is to offset the 'average' cost of licence applications but the use of average costs and the banding of fees heavily disadvantages the smallest projects. The logical solution is to exempt all domestic scale projects, as they were before the *1991 Water Resources Act*. It appears that the EA are trying to recover some of their enormous legal costs following claims against them for incompetence in preparing a licence for a watermill on the River Avon that took 12 years.

The public rightly question the subsidies paid to generators of renewable energy, but to switch from subsidies to punitive 'taxation' is quite extraordinary and has all but destroyed the fledgling waterpower industry. Traditional Watermills, for so long part of the English countryside are being consigned to history along with their millstreams that support wildlife including fish, eels, birds and insects, and in the case of my own mill, otters and beavers.

There are also fees for the extraction of heat from the sea, rivers and ponds with 'heat pumps, one of the most efficient and environmentally benign technologies and much trumpeted by the present Government. The Royal Festival Hall on the South Bank was heated entirely from the River Thames using a 'heat pump'. The system built in 1951 removed heat from the river and transferred it to the theatre. It actually turned out to be so effective that it overheated the building and was illogically replaced with a lower efficiency boiler.

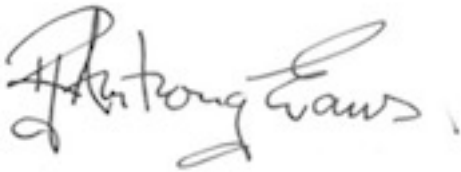
The rivers of the UK are capable of supplying the entire UK domestic heating load. The reason why this vast potential hasn't been recognised may be that politicians simply don't understand the physics. Fish and hydropower can and should be complimentary because 'heat pumps' can take away some of the surplus heat resulting from Global Warming and use it to heat buildings

It is worth noting that Hinkley Nuclear Power Station will cost £23bn and have an output of 3.6 GW, whereas heat pumps could produce more than ten times this output in the form of domestic heating for the same money. The technology isn't new, it's simply that it hasn't been adopted on a large scale as it requires cooperation between government departments and a lighter approach to regulation.

A Parliamentary Petition has been raised by Caroline Stephenson that can be found at:

<https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/615664>

To make any meaningful impact there need to be a lot of signatures. If you can ask at least half a dozen of your friends, particularly mill owners and those involved or enthusiastic about saving the planet to copy this letter to half a dozen others, the numbers will grow. I am happy to take any enquiries, so please help.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rupert Armstrong Evans". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rupert Armstrong Evans
01566 782323

Newspaper Article

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/apr/30/is-this-the-end-for-the-traditional-british-watermill>