Playing a central role in energy reviews

"Swipe card plan to ration consumers' carbon use" ran a typical national headline as Defra Secretary of State David Miliband unveiled his plans in mid July for a pilot scheme in the UK to ration energy use.

In fact the scheme is modelled on work part-funded by EFRC under The Lean Economy Connection, working with Dr David Fleming and detailed as TEQs – Tradable Energy Quotas in EFRC Bulletin 81 in December 2005. We are delighted Mr Miliband has taken notice.

The latest publication from Dr Fleming is The Lean Guide to Nuclear Energy – A life-cycle in trouble. (LEC, Price £5.00) In review it is described as "the final proof that nuclear power is a dangerous cul-de-sac".

www.theleaneconomyconnection.net www.teqs.net

NUCLEAR ENERGY - In Brief

1. Each stage in the nuclear energy life-cycle, apart from fission itself, produces carbon dioxide. As the industry is forced to turn to poorer-quality ores, the quantity of carbon dioxide produced by the industry will rise.
2. The nuclear industry has fifty years of accumulated waste in temporary storage, much of which is already unstable and, unless made safe and placed in permanent disposal sites, will break down, causing many centuries of recurring radioactive shock.
3. That backlog includes wastes which have escaped attention, notably uranium hexafluoride, a halogenated compound. The global warming potential of halogenated compounds ranges up to 10,000 times that of carbon dioxide.
4. The industry therefore faces the prospect of "energy bankruptcy". This will occur when the energy obtainable from the remaining uranium ore is less than the energy needed to deal with the waste. The date of energy bankruptcy is not known but, as a provisional estimate, it may be expected in the 2020s.
5. The nuclear industry's priority should now be as follows:

   (a) Produce a detailed worldwide nuclear energy budget showing how all present and future nuclear wastes and facilities – including nuclear power stations due to be flooded by rising sea levels – are to be made safe, how much energy this will require, and how the energy needed for this will be generated.

   (b) Produce no more nuclear energy over and above current contracts until that energy budget has been drawn up, agreed by independent review as realistic, and action on it started.
6. We face a profoundly destabilising energy gap. Nuclear energy provides a false sense of security, deterring us from facing up to the reality of that gap and taking action.
7. It is essential now to focus on the strategy of "Lean Energy". Lean Energy consists of: (1) energy conservation and efficiency; (2) structural change to build decentralised local energy systems; and (3) renewable energy; all within (4) a framework, such as tradable energy quotas (TEQs), leading to deep reductions in energy demand.
8. Further commercial development of nuclear energy will have two effects. It will divert resources from developing Lean Energy at the needed scale and speed, making that core programme harder, or impossible. And it will condemn the world to an inheritance of untreatable waste and radioactive shock.