



An artist's impression of how the five-mile wind farm, one of the largest in England, would look. The 400ft turbines would march from Tebay and Shap to the edge of the Yorkshire Dales, destroying tourism and a precious landscape, say critics

# Vast wind farm in Lake District 'would be insanity'

**BUILDING** a huge wind farm across five miles of Lake District fells would set a dangerous precedent and destroy tourism, it was claimed at a public inquiry yesterday.

Chalmerston Wind Power Ltd and West Coast Energy want to build 27 400ft turbines which they say would generate enough electricity for 46,000 homes.

Green campaigners are backing the £55million Whinash project, which would stretch from Tebay and Shap, overlooking the M6 motorway, to the edge of the Yorkshire Dales.

Opponents, including Lord Bragg, Lord Parkinson and Sir Chris Bonington, who will all give evidence, are fighting the plans which they say would destroy a precious landscape.

Members of the No Whinash Windfarm group protested yesterday outside the Shap Wells Hotel, Penrith, on the opening day of the



Against: Melvyn Bragg

10-week inquiry. Kyle Blue, the group's spokesman, said: "Putting a wind farm on a precious landscape like this is insane. I am not against wind energy per se but I am against systems such as this which are simply obtrusive and ill-considered."

"Our reasons for opposing the farm have nothing to do



with nimbysm. The fact is that this wind farm will not deliver what the public is led to believe it will.

"When you look at all the reports coming out of Europe about wind farms it is obvious this is not the way forward."

Mr Blue, 53, an estate agent, called on ministers to look at the French model which relies

more on nuclear energy to reduce carbon dioxide levels.

He said his group had received 14,000 letters opposing the scheme.

"If this project proceeds it will open the finest, windy countryside to similar developments, and perhaps place national parks at risk.

for insignificant benefits to

## Electricity

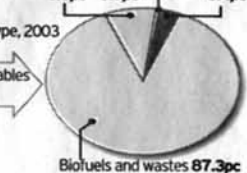
By fuel type, 2003  
Gas 38pc



Operating turbines in Britain: 1212; 62 of which are offshore.  
Power produced: 925 megawatts, enough for annual needs of 517,200 households. Tower size: up to 260ft. Rotor diameter: up to 210ft

## Renewables

By fuel type, 2003  
Hydro 8.6pc Solar 0.7pc Wind 3.4pc



For: Jill Perry

the nation," added Mr Blue. Andrew Newcombe, of Chalmerston Wind Power, said the project was in the public interest in helping meet government targets on renewable energy and most of the objections were from private interest groups.

Whitehall has said that to meet its target of 10 per

cent of energy from renewable sources by 2010, 10,000 megawatts would need to be generated, the equivalent of between 5,000 and 10,000 turbines.

Jill Perry, of Friends of the Earth, which supports the project alongside the Green Party, argued that the farm would not have as great an

impact on tourism and the lives of local people as critics believed. She said: "It is partly nimbysm and it is partly that they are using arguments that don't add up."

"For example they claim the turbines will kill birds and there is no evidence to show that

and cars would kill a lot more. Traditionally Friends of the Earth have a history of being in opposition to new developments. But it is very important that we support the building of wind farms to solve the problems we have caused in the past."

David MacLean, the Conservative candidate for Penrith and the Borders, said "A steel noose is being placed around the neck of the Lake District."

"There are applications to build massive wind farms all around the national park which will destroy this precious landscape and fail to plug the massive energy gap we will have by 2010.

"Giant wind turbines cause visual pollution, destroy jobs in tourism and only work a third of the time.

"Wind power is not the answer to the energy gap and is not an acceptable solution."