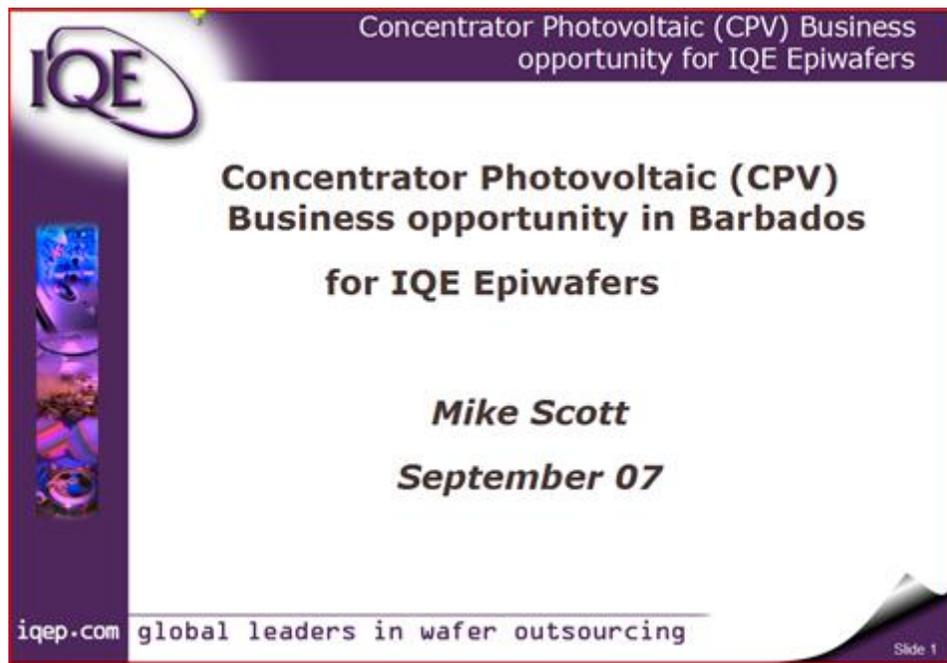




Solar Energy Policy In Barbados Exposed

May 17, 2009 · [53 Comments](#)



The following was submitted by a member of the **BU** family. We have published with minor edits in the interest of creating greater public awareness on the importance for all stakeholders in Barbados to pursue a sustainable energy strategy. We are sure that Keith Headley (the son of the late Oliver Headley, solar energy pioneer), Bush tea et al can lead the discussion on behalf of the other non-technical members of the **BU** family. [If the BU family member who made the submission wants to reveal his identity, we invite him to comment as well.](#)

Barbados Underground

The information included in that attachment was part of a presentation by **Professor M. Scott** at the **Future Centre on Dec.10, 2007**. I invited him to speak to the stakeholders here (Barbados) because he knew what he was speaking about. I asked, "If I could arrange a meeting with the stakeholders here would you be willing to do a presentation for me?" He agreed.

I had met Prof. Scott briefly before but on this occasion, I learned what he did. He was amazed that Barbados had not made any strides in Solar- PV business. He felt Barbados could the leader in the Caribbean. I am confident he would do everything to assist Barbados.

Northern Ireland under the leadership of Peter Hain, commenced a project by offering grants to householders to install PV on their rooftops. The system worked like this:

PV on the roof to generate metered electricity for the grid; each dwelling has 2 meters, one records electricity used in the household and the other records electricity manufactured by the PV system. The meter man comes along and reads both meters. If the householder uses less electricity than what is recorded by the PV

system, the householder is given a credit note. Next time if the householder uses more than what the PV manufactured, he pays the full amount or the remainder on his credit note.

In the summertime, some householders did not pay anything for their electricity and those PV system were at most 10% efficient. **(There is one meter available now to do the jobs of both; it can spin forward as well as backward)**. The Government of Mauritius is on record that it intends to have every household with PV on their rooftops. A few months ago, a relative of mine in the South of Ireland (Eire) rang to say the Government was introducing solar PV on the rooftops. If such a system was introduced here; with our year round sunshine, many of us would not have to pay for our electricity.... We the people would benefit, but this would not be good for the shareholders of BL&P – *Perhaps a set rate could be introduced to be connected to the grid, or the PV system can be installed by BL&P for a set period of time.*

The PV system now mailed to you is similar to that in the Israeli video clip in your earlier **blog on solar**, but not as bulky; please see 'slide 6'... it doesn't take up much room; can generate much more electricity than the system now being used on rooftops. A space about the size of an ordinary house could generate electricity for many homes. You can read what is taking place in California, Spain and Portugal.

In February 2008, I attended a presentation on renewable energy at Cave Hill University. Mr. Blackman from BL&P was invited to speak for 10 minutes. In his brief message, he stated that solar panels located on the roof of the 'Future Centre', was providing more electricity than they anticipated; no maintenance is necessary....Again I must add those are the less efficient PV system. Professor M. Scott says, the efficiency is improving all the time. The system is built so that as improvements in the system continue, sections can be removed and the improved parts can be added. **Professor Scott thinks Barbados could be the leader here in the Caribbean and could export to the rest.** This would generate many long term jobs here in Barbados. Those interested would be put in touch with the right people.

Germany is excelling in this technology for domestic and export. Most of the manufacturing businesses are from what was termed, the Eastern side of Germany and were encouraging workers from the 'Western side' to better paid jobs, to assemble this technology. This Government can join with the private sector to set up a system here to assemble for the market, Barbados and the Caribbean. It may be costly at first, but in the long term, we the people would benefit. *(The sun would not be expensive in 10, 20 or 100 years)*. The government can introduce a system similar to water metering. **Calculate how many Kilowatts of electricity an average household would use and then introduce a tier system above that rate; those who are careful would pay less.**

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53 responses so far ↓



• **David** // [May 17, 2008 at 7:23 PM](#)

We invite all the BU family to spread the word. Let us discuss this matter with all it is worth. Invite people who feel can add value to the discussion. Invite ordinary people who may not be aware of the possibilities. We can do it PEOPLE but we have to try.

• **Eastern Son** // [May 17, 2008 at 9:13 PM](#)

I am all for this. The prospect for individuals to manufacture solar panels from “scratch” is hard – we probably do not have the natural resources to do so – but what am I saying?!! We have sand.. is that not silicon?? we need help.. we need this administration to re-enact the research and development to get this to happen. Who knows who right now? Who can get action? We really do not want to be directed by the stalwarts that still have their claws into this new Government to dictate our energy path!

- **Solar Energy In Barbados, Barbadians Being Short Changed** // [May 17, 2008 at 9:51 PM](#)

[...] LorMarie wrote an interesting post today onHere’s a quick excerpt [...]

- **anotherview** // [May 17, 2008 at 11:05 PM](#)

This matter is very important. The Minister responsible for energy should be talking to Barbadians about this matter. Who is the Minister responsible?

- **Paradox** // [May 18, 2008 at 12:00 AM](#)

BU:

I agree the government should make the decision to formulate an energy policy. If left to a private company, it will do what it thinks is best for itself and the interest of the country could be less served.



- **David** // [May 18, 2008 at 8:12 AM](#)

Senator Darcy Boyce has responsibility. Here is an interesting titbit which we were able to search-out. We wish to place great emphasis on search-out. It seems under our laws the Barbados Light & Power has responsibility to distribute and not generate power. Much of the language in public and on BU has been about BL&P generating power from alternative energy sources. Now the inaccuracy has been shattered.

FTC's ROLE MAY BE REVIEWED

The role of the Fair Trading Commission (FTC) is likely to be reviewed and expanded to deal with pricing of electrical power from independent power suppliers.

This was revealed today by Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance, Senator Darcy Boyce, as he delivered the feature address at the second meeting of experts and stakeholders concerning the development of harmonised legislation for the reform of the electricity sector at the Amaryllis Hotel.

According to Senator Boyce, this amendment to the FTC's role would be necessary because the Barbados Light and Power (BL&P) had a licence for distribution, but not for power generation. He said, however, that as Barbados moved towards the wider use of alternative sources of energy, such as solar energy, arrangements would have to be put in place to allow the BL&P to purchase that power.

The Minister stressed that government's energy policy would be very focussed on protecting the environment in active ways, in terms of using the renewable energy sources where there was a net benefit to the environment.

He said they would also make sure that energy producers did not contaminate the environment while doing so, and if they did contaminate it, that they would clean up afterwards.

"Damage to one of our countries may not be seen by the international community as damage to that country alone. It may probably be seen as environmental contamination in the whole region and, therefore, all of us become at risk if we do not seek to make sure that each one of us treats contamination in an equally rigorous manner," Senator Boyce stated.

The Minister told participants that in order to have a conservation plan which was focussed, it must have people working on real practical ways to reduce the use of energy in their operations: "We need to understand how our economy is using energy, sector by sector, and industry by industry," he stressed.

Suggesting that experts and stakeholders across the region should collaborate and look at the energy co-efficients in the various industries, he said: "We do not know if we are shooting in the dark on these matters, we need to stop doing that."

Senator Boyce also mentioned several concerns related to the electricity sector, including reducing this country's foreign exchange usage, reducing the vulnerability of the country to supply shocks, ensuring that there was efficiency in the use of electricity by businesses and households and efficiency in the use of energy by those who produce electrical power.

"Therefore, we have got some work started already on our energy conservation plan and once we've had time to review it ... that will come to Cabinet for approval because we know that we need to reduce the cost of energy per dollar," he stated.

• **Keltruth Corp.** // May 18, 2008 at 9:44 AM

I have a brief post on this subject, with a video showing the installation of the panels here: <http://keltruthblog.com/blog/?p=165>

With the high start-up costs, Government may have to support the energy alternative of its choice for success.

It may be a bit early for this technology.

• **Keltruth Corp.** // May 18, 2008 at 10:00 AM

I think my last comment was blocked, but I have linked to a video on the installation on my post "Electricity from the Sun?"

• **The People's Democratic Congress** // May 18, 2008 at 1:33 PM

Whereas, it is so very important at this juncture for many people in Barbados to promote the likely overwhelming net benefits that would accrue from the country's mass installation of solar technological applications for whatever meaningful social, residential, industrial, commercial, and scientific purposes through out the country, and, too, whereas, it is so important to look to some other countries, which have been seriously developing their respective solar industries for the benefit of themselves and others, certainly for guidance and insight into how to further develop our very stunted solar industry, the facts of the matter are that in Barbados there can be NO NO GREAT AND FURTHER BUILDING WHATSOEVER upon much of what Mr. James Husbands, the late Prof. Oliver Headley and some relevant others have already importantly done to help lay much of the foundation for this solar industry in Barbados, UNLESS there is the existence of the implementation of a substantial set of well-thought out and well-coordinated national policy measures and incentives and the institutional capabilities for actually implementing those measures and incentives and for making lesser the social and financial cost of the continued growth and development of our solar energy/electricity potential.

And, as many of us in Barbados can verily see, there is NO such underlying structure or culture – for doing the immediately above – existing in this country!! How sad and tragic!! What this therefore fundamentally means is that we of this beautiful country will continue, at this stage, to waste so many of our precious energies, times, skills, monies and resources on deliberating about solar/power industry development, given, as it seems right now, that we are primarily about just developing this industry for the sake of doing so and for achieving personal private gain, rather than our presently using such amounts of precious energies, times , etc., into helping make sure that the development of our solar industry itself takes place within the context of wider, more conducive national social, political, material and financial revolutionary change, and for the better, for Barbados.

Hence, what many of these people in Barbados that are seriously inclined to think about the solar industry issues of the country need to do is to take a critical look at ALL the various utility based industries in Barbados and learn how these industries are fundamentally able to seriously continue, with the overt assistance of the state, the elite political exploitation of the working classes (masses and middle classes) of people of Barbados, largely through these businesses that operate within these industries, and that are major components of these industries, over the years putting great emphases on things like making sure that the greatest amount of people possible are able to access their services in the country so as to achieve greater revenues, all thing remaining equal, like making sure that the profits are increased regularly for the owners/ shareholders, and the salaries/perks done the same thing for their directors and top managers, and like making sure that their public relations and social responsibility machineries are well-oiled for whatever public image building and corporate-weaning tasks that lie ahead. Certainly, the solar industry is heading in such a particular elite political exploitation direction, given the way how the businesses that comprise such an industry operate and how they are structured for personal private gain of the owners, mainly, and NOT the workers – who themselves should all like now be part-owners of these enterprises.

Finally, such indutries – including the retarded solar industry – should have by now reached the levels whereby the country as a whole would have been net benefitting from them more, rather than they net benefitting from country more. By making sure that TAXATION, INTEREST RATES, MOTOR VEHICLE INSURANCE AND EXCHANGE RATES PARITIES, ARE ABOLISHED, AMONG OTHER SOCIAL, POLITICAL, MATERIAL AND FINANCIAL REVOLUTIONARY MEASURES, a future PDC Government shall NOT ONLY be looking to help put in place a national environment that is more (rather than less) conducive and beneficial to the further growth and development of utility based industries in Barbados, BUT ALSO looking to put in place one (the same one as before) that is gaining and developing more – more from the activities of all other industries in the countries – and which too would be more than these industries are able to benefit from the country.

PDC

- **Technician** // [May 18, 2008 at 5:05 PM](#)

By making sure that TAXATION, INTEREST RATES, MOTOR VEHICLE INSURANCE AND EXCHANGE RATES PARITIES, ARE ABOLISHED.....

Are you people living in the same universe as I am?

- **Eastern Son** // [May 18, 2008 at 6:58 PM](#)

The PDC are making very sure that they are considered mentally unstable and never viable for any place in the administration of this country.

• **The People's Democratic Congress** // May 18, 2008 at 8:05 PM

To the blogger, Technician

If you care to, you can visit our [website@www.somassfreedom.org](http://www.somassfreedom.org), and download our Pre-election Manifesto 2006, and, of course, visit some our earlier submissions on this blogsite (BU), for a good understanding of why a future PDC Government is going to ABOLISH TAXATION, INTEREST RATES, MOTOR VEHICLE INSURANCE, EXCHANGE RATES PARITIES WITH THE BARBADOS DOLLAR, MAKE INSTITUTIONAL LOANS FOR PRODUCTIVE PURPOSES NON-REPAYABLE, MAKE IMPORTS OF GOODS AND SERVICES INTO THIS COUNTRY ZERO-"PRICED" AT ALL POINTS OF ENTRY, MAKE EXPORTS OF GOODS AND SERVICES PAID FOR IN LOCAL CURRENCY/ "PRICES", those revolutionary measures and more implemented in the interest of the greatest progress and development possible of this wonderful country.

Also, do you have a good understanding of what the BLP is telling the DLP and, by extension, the public via the Sunday Sun, today, May 18, 2008? Thus, against the backdrop of the DLP increasing the prices of gasoline, diesel, kerosene and LPG on April 13, do you think you can really understand what the BLP, at its Northern Zonal Conference on Saturday 17, May 2008, was saying to the DLP and the public, when it asked the DLP Government to immediately remove the ADDITIONAL TAXES IMPOSED ON gasoline and diesel by REDUCING the EXCISE TAX to COUNTERACT the INCREASED VALUE ADDED TAX take of seven cents per litre on gas and 15 cents per litre on diesel?

Also, what do you understand the BLP to have said when it talked in terms of asking the DLP Government TO REINSTATE a SUBSIDY ON diesel that had sustained JOBS and the productive sectors for decades? Furthermore, do you fully comprehend what the BLP has said to the DLP Government in terms of it (the BLP) suggesting to the Government that it raises a BOND to provide the BDS \$ 80 million owed to the Barbados National Oil Company, instead of asking the consumer to FUND THE DEBT BY PAYING an additional four cents per litre on gas and diesel? And, finally, what do you realize when the BLP suggested to the DLP Government that it – the government – INCREASE THE REVERSE TAX CREDIT, and ESTABLISH A WAGES FUND out of the INCREASED TAX RATE – as a RESULT of the HIGHER "PRICES" of goods and services in the economy – to ASSIST those feeling the pinch both at the bottom and middle levels of society?

If you had to read today's Sunday Sun to find out about the above propositions – and we assume that for whatever reasons you were NOT at the event to have heard them spoken directly to – would you, nevertheless, still be able to understand, Technician, what these propositions are and/or signifying, and still able to understand any theoretical implications that would possibly arise from their theoretical implementation? If you do understand, you must be good at understanding such. If you do not, you must really read our Pre-election Manifesto!! One hint, though, does NOT what the BLP has been stating – these propositions – seem as if they are about to lead us into another total mess and muddle, and right into another dangerous cul-de sac, as both parties have long done in relationship to those kinds of propositions? Last, and for goodness sake, if you care to, critically analyse the words in the CAPITALS above, AND EACH AGAINST THE OTHER, and in the context of our 2006 Pre-election Manifesto policy measures, to see, if you can, the empowering and liberating direction in which PDC is heading.

PDC



• **David** // May 18, 2008 at 10:35 PM

Should we take it that the suggestion offered by the BU family member is a dud? Seems to us that people who knew so much about solar has suddenly lost their voices. Very interesting indeed.

• **Natural Mystic** // [May 19, 2008 at 6:56 AM](#)

Very interesting article. BU should be commended for suggesting that the general public install solar and reduce their net carbon footprint. Maybe the BU would go to Ireland and research/publish the legislation surrounding solar in Ireland? We will wait expectantly to see what Ireland rules by law.

I am in Canada, and I shall do the same here. Quebec, Canada exports hydro- and wind-generated electricity to other areas 'generating' a profit in energy. Would BU post this info if it were available?

Lastly the big question, in Barbados, with its tradition for squashing good in the interest of established big business, will Barbados Light and Power relinquish its monopoly for the good of the island if it sees that it might possibly lose some expected profit? Will the mousely FTC and government actually act in the best interest of the island, or are we only dreaming of what could be in a land of good but living in a land where all is corrupt?

Bajans maybe are disolutioned with blog's role in the above and have stopped commenting?

• **JR** // [May 19, 2008 at 12:31 PM](#)

Well David you know I have been pushing this line so I am hoping that we can get some momentum going.

Thanks.

• **Keith Headley** // [May 19, 2008 at 2:16 PM](#)

Hi Everyone,

Keith Headley here. I just got back my internet (mostly) from Cable and Wireless, so I have only just seen this post.

If you knew half the ways I do to make electricity – and it's not being done because of PEST (Politics Economics Social Technical) you would weep. The politics of energy are such that unless the issue becomes popular (thank God for blogs) it remains on the back burner. Then where do we get the money? Then you have NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard), the social issues, which have already affected the proposed BL&P wind power project – which according to them, if built now will give 2% of Barbados' electricity needs. Only after all of these does anybody ask if it is technically feasible. Let me tell what I know. I know that if we had continued with the project to assemble Solar Panels in Barbados, we would be mining silicon gold now. I know that if all the PV projects that were put in Barbados were still functioning, persons could do their PhD's from the information gathered; and right on down to school children could benefit from the knowledge and experience gained. I know that no-one wants to hear these things. Renewable energy is a dead issue in Barbados as far as some are concerned. And please, let it stay that way because we don't want anyone digging up the past and BLAME being apportioned.

I don't care about who is at fault. I care that no-one wants to hear about PV in the annals of power. I care that no-one is willing to invest the millions of dollars it will take to take Barbados forward.

I don't care who gets the credit as long as SOMEONE does something. But not matter how much noise you make no-one is listening. Let's see if this blog and others like it can change that.



• **David** // [May 19, 2008 at 6:33 PM](#)

Keith Headley, today we heard David Ellis on the mid-day callin program alluded to the fact that your father did not attract the support of corporate Barbados because they thought he elected to take solar development down a path which they disagreed.

Would you want to shed any light if you can?

• **Keith Headley** // [May 19, 2008 at 6:43 PM](#)

David,

the only thing I can think of is that were some persons who thought that valuable, hard earned information on Solar and Renewable Energy should not be given away to all and sundry – there should fees charged for it. There were many who thought that way. I agree there are times to charge a consulting fee – but what about those who cannot afford it, and probably never will? No, I think they bigger problem was that they saw short term money to be made on drilling oil and dropped the ball on the long term returns. That is like investing in steam power when the internal combustion engine began to take over. Who uses steam power now? Very few things.



• **David** // [May 19, 2008 at 6:47 PM](#)

Thanks Keith!

Have you approached the UWI and Sir Hillary? Do you know what is the university's position? Additionally what about James Husband and Minister Darcy Boyce. Your leanage should open doors. Our concern is that as a nation we have been relying on the BL&P but our understanding is that this model company is responsible under the act for energy distribution and not generation.

• **Keith Headley** // [May 19, 2008 at 7:04 PM](#)

The last time I spoke to UWI they were interested but not all that interested. James Husbands is very interested all well as the folks at the other "Solar" companies. But let me try to explain something. Renewable Energy is a lot like Tourism. One good hotel, a few good guest houses does not a tourism product make. There has to be a decided effort of Government to move in that direction. Millions of dollars sunk, as it were, and a constant effort at marketing yourself as "the"

destination.

In fact, Colin Hudson and my father wanted to change Barbados' tourism product to "Green" – self reliant in food and energy; a great example among developing nations. Right now this dream has been lost. Yes there is talk. But I have the same healthy measure of caution as other tourism-experienced bloggers do when they hear talk. BUT lets see a policy paper or a serious proposal to put a few million into it like was done for drilling for oil. Then I will gladly support it once its sensible. The interest is there. The organised money is not. It has gone elsewhere, after other projects.



• **David** // [May 19, 2008 at 7:14 PM](#)

Keith we are with you so far. be patient we are using this process to get the BU family to understand the task at hand. So in essence you are saying our politicians found the millions to do CWC 2007, build Greenland, expand roads and possibly build flyovers and others too numerous to mention BUT to sink money into a solar-alternative energy program to sustain our nation for years to come, we have given it the cold shoulder because we are happy to manage in the present.

Is that it?

• **Keith Headley** // [May 19, 2008 at 7:26 PM](#)

David you are 90 (ninety) percent right. The only thing I would add is that you look at the last Government's (pre-election) policy on energy. It was all about oil. According to our then energy minister, oil was going to be our savior. Not sustainable development; not PV; not value added projects made from sugar. The future was oil. Renewable energy was no longer a priority because we had oil.



• **David** // [May 19, 2008 at 7:31 PM](#)

We did not forget we wanted to finish with this comment. [The policy which you just exposed was able to create a situation where a Minister of the Environment and Energy Elizabeth Thompson was able to get a major award donated by the UN.](#)

• **Bush tea** // [May 19, 2008 at 9:19 PM](#)

David,

Keith can talk all he like, and he makes technical sense too; but I suggest that the key to the development of any kind of alternative energy in Barbados is directly tied to attitudes at BL&P.

The technical issues with Solar and Wind have all been solved. They work.

In fact, coupled with a sensible (as opposed to wasteful as at present) use of energy, the various potential alternatives to fossil fuel can realistically serve Barbados very well.

IT WOULD HOWEVER, REQUIRE A BIG CHANGE IN LIFESTYLE .

The problem is that there is presently NOTHING in this for BL&P -except possibly being seen as altruistic....

..you ever see a fat, well-fed, contented, (lazy?) person decide to put a lot of sweat into something that is of no real benefit?

What sweat what?!?

Here is a big issue that Keith has not mentioned...

Battery systems are more expensive, more prone to damage, more complex and have inherent environmental issues....

Grid tied systems are much easier and cheaper... BUT... the question of connecting to BL&P carries not only cost issues, but probably even more importantly, safety issues.

What happens when BL&P wants to work in the area? Who will be responsible if customer equipment in the area is damaged by supply problems, surges, etc?

This could lead to PV owners having to purchase expensive safety switches, dump loads, even insurance, etc

Then there is the question of coordinating the various different types of equipment installed in the different homes....

...and all this at unit costs approaching \$50,000 -\$70,000 (including installation, electrical wiring, safety equipment, measuring equipment etc)????

I am not optimistic

What COULD work at this late stage, would be a BL&P driven initiative to invest in solar and wind generation instead of scheduled fossil installations. PV panels could be installed on public buildings such as schools etc...

To raise funds, shares could be sold to customers wishing to invest in the new technology and profits could be determined in relation to the replacement benefits of fossil fuel saved – a real attraction for investors.

Failing BL&P interest, the Government /FTC could ‘encourage’ such a policy by proper incentives and penalties...as is common in many successful alt energy countries.

Only a focused well coordinated approach could possible get us into any kind of ready state within two years (which is what would be needed...)

...but this is just talk,this won't happen either – although it is the only chance. (....because we have no leadership, no vision, no wisdom, and no guts....)

• **Keith Headley** // [May 20, 2008 at 5:48 AM](#)

Bush Tea could talk all he like . . .

But seriously people. I agree with his point but those of us who have been waiting on Government and BL&P to do something would die waiting.

Let me tell you a story. A true story. When Solar Water Heaters were first introduced into Barbados they were considered expensive and ugly. They were rejected by the social elite. Except for one woman. She told all her friends to buy one – they were the future of Barbados.

This is the major reason they took off.

Now we are in the same position again. I accept how Barbados works. Someone with power needs to champion the cause or it will be years before anything happens.

Barbados is not primarily Policy driven – it is people with power driven. Policy follows the people with power.

Who can you convince that renewable energy is good idea today?



• **David** // [May 20, 2008 at 6:57 AM](#)

It seems to us that we have consensus that solar is viable if we can only have some leadership from our governments. A National Energy Plan which will see the government creating the framework to build a solar energy supply and co-opt the Barbados Light & Power in the process must happen next. The new DLP government has repeated its pledge to building alternative sources of energy, we will have to wait until the next budget presentation maybe?

News breaking over the last two days is that Barbados has submitted a claim for 200 more miles off our coastline which will no doubt promote more tension between T&T and Barbados. Perhaps more importantly it has signaled our long term dependence on oil.

• **Thewhiterabbit** // [May 20, 2008 at 10:09 AM](#)

In the end it is all about money. Photovoltaic panels are costly, so calculate how many years it will take for your rooftop system to pay back the capital investment. Generally we will all be dead before that happens. At this point the system is sold on the feel good principle, you feel good because you think you are doing something for the environment. Did you consider the effects to the environment of the manufacture of your rooftop system? Did you consider the effects to the environment of the disposal of your rooftop system when it finally does give out? Finally, all the electricity is generated in the day. If you go for the big battery storage system then you have to account for all the lead used and its effect on the environment. If you go for the spin the meter backward approach, then it is necessary to note that BL&P must have conventional generators in place for periods when the photovoltaic panels are not producing. The capital cost for those conventional systems makes up a huge part of your electricity bill. So, you will contribute some juice from the sun, but you have to pay the capital costs of the photovoltaic panels AND you have to pay the capital costs for the conventional generators for times when Mr.Sun is not shining. Economically this is a lose-lose situation. If you don't mind paying for the feel-good feeling, then go for it. Wind power suffers the same economic negatives, plus being noisy and unsightly.

Thewhiterabbit has stated before, and will state again, that our local solution to power is to have BL&P get really CSME in nature and go to our nearby neighbors who have lots of hot rocks and produce our power

geothermally. All off the shelf technology, free energy, costs limited to capital for the plant and the undersea cables to bring it here. It is now being installed in Nevis and in Dominica. Why are we here in Bim so isolated mentally that we cannot step back from the painting long enough to see that there is at least one intelligent way forward. If BL&P does it then BL&P shareholders will not suffer in the least. In Nevis and in Dominica the power will be sold to nearby islands. We can do it, too!

• **JR** // [May 20, 2008 at 12:43 PM](#)

If you look at the cost savings in terms of fuel to generate electricity is solar electricity still a feel good investment?

• **Anonymous** // [May 20, 2008 at 2:14 PM](#)

What about natural gas from Trinidad?

• **Keith Headley** // [May 20, 2008 at 2:59 PM](#)

Dear White Rabbit

let us ignore the politics of distributed energy production vis a vis Trinidad, Jamaica and Guyana (Oil, Bauxite and Hydro) – and the many times it hasn't worked. Let us ignore the fact that no Caribbean nation wants to rely on any other for anything – not even “weed”. Finally let us ignore multi-millions it cost TeleBarbados to run a fibre optic cable here – and the fact that a power cable is more expensive for various reasons.

In other words let us ignore the PES of PEST. Let's just deal with technical feasibility.

Geothermal is one of the easiest of all forms of renewable energy to do. Power companies love it because there is very little difference between it and normal energy generation. Replace steam generated from fuel oil (in our case bunker c) with steam generated from pumping water underground.

All the other issues of maintaining the generator, power lines, etc remain.

The idea with PV, is that like with water heaters, where number of electric heaters is reduced to a minimum, is that the amount of normal-style power generation should be reduced to a minimum.

To solve the “at night problem” most places use a mix of wind (especially out to sea where they bother no-one; since we're ignoring costs we'll ignore the fact this costs more like the we ignore the upkeep costs of traditional power) and PV.

PV is most usefully at handling peak power – the more heat and A/C use, the more PV power; while wind provides good steady state power.

I don't want to sound harsh but the truth is the truth. Those “problems” you mentioned – recycling (PV recycling is big business – do you know what aluminum and CPU grade silicon are now worth?); noise and

sight – we can put wind off shore where no-one can see or hear it – even though it’s not as “noisy” as most people think; have all been solved, in multiple ways.

Affects the environment – 90% good 10% bad.

This post is already too long, just google “benefits of PV”.

Finally, there is the technical expertise and power lowering that always occurs when people take responsibility for their own electricity generation. As people become educated to take care of their significant (even if subsidized) investment, they use electricity (as with hot water) more intelligently.

They stop buying the most expensive fridge, and look at what they need, and if they can get or afford an ultra-efficient one.

They buy better bulbs, and turn off appliances when they aren’t using them.

They see what’s costing them money – and they make changes. When all you get is a bill, it’s much more difficult to educate people, as BL&P will tell you.

Right now we are facing an energy crisis.

BL&P is rushing the St. Lucy plant because in two years, if we don’t generate significantly more power than we do now, we will be facing brown outs and rolling blackouts.

Finally there many simple ways to completely replace batteries – just use two water tanks for example. One tank above the other and appropriate pumps. Pump up to store – let flow down to generate power.

The simple truth is that for geothermal to make sense we need to own the area, land or sea, that the vent is on.

This is not about what benefits the BL&P shareholders. This is about survival since Energy is vital to our survival as a nation. Which is technically more feasible, putting all the relevant overhead cables underground before the next statistically due category 5 hurricane or putting a steel and concrete roof over essential buildings and PV panels in a steel frame on these roofs before this same hurricane hits us?

We have to make some hard choices – but please, base them on the best technical facts, even if you are ignoring everything else.

• **Keith Headley** // [May 20, 2008 at 3:10 PM](#)

I want to comment about money but it will have to wait until I get home. I would almost agree with The White Rabbit and say that 80% of this energy problem is about money – especially here in Barbados.

But the rest of this argument will have to wait until later.

Hi Keith

Can you send us your email address please?

David

• **Bush tea** // [May 20, 2008 at 7:42 PM](#)

The point that 'thewhiterabbit' needs to ponder is that the days of being able to 'choose' the most economic solutions are about to end. (Crude now \$128.88 per barrel)

Common sense now dictates that countries and individuals are best advised to seek energy options that are under their political control.

Our world is just one major terrorist (or critical natural) event- from total oil crisis

When the reality hits us- of NO oil available to us (for whatever reason), the attractiveness of an independent source such as wind or solar will become much clearer.

The idea of looking to external alternative sources of energy (Trini gas, hot rocks etc) is also short sighted. This is just another trap just as cheap oil has been. Our future will be one of high cost energy – what ever the source.

Making decisions on energy alternatives at this stage based mainly on capital costs is short sighted indeed.... This will all become clear next year.

• **Keith Headley** // [May 21, 2008 at 10:31 AM](#)

While I agree almost completely with Bush Tea's point, I want to forget about that for a moment.

Let's talk money.

I am often told I get too technical (I love Mathematics) so let's forget future value, depreciation, etc. No maths, as simple as possible. If I'm challenged then we can get technical.

But not now. Now, we keep it as simple as possible.

Two men put in renewable energy systems. One can afford anything as is doing it to "show off".

The other is doing it "on the cheap" to save money.

SO (show off) decides to put a few panels on his roof – just for show even though every thing works (I'm assuming that they both have expert advice and installation skills available to them whether paid for or for free) – and a medium size windmill somewhere in his extensive lands. It's big enough to look good but not so big as to be heard by anyone, anywhere or to chop up his TV and Radio signals.

The real power comes from his company which owns a geothermal plant in St. Vincent and supplies power to five islands in the Caribbean (focus people – remember – only looking at the money . . .) under fairly lucrative contracts. These are St. Vincent, One of the Grenadines, St. Lucia, Barbados and Grenada. Bribery to governments is suspected but nothing can be proven. He has invested at least 180 million US so far and more is forthcoming as Caribbean governments demand more energy for projects. This is a time of foreign investment (best case money scenario here people, stay with me).

OTC (on the cheap) buys a single BP 585 (the world's most efficient single crystal panel) from Bitterroot Solar

<http://www.bitterrootsolar.com/solar/bp585.htm>

for 445.00 US (one the cheapest places in the US). His not-too-happy brother brings it down for him as luggage.

He was going to buy a charge controller but after reading about the skystream air-x he buys one from The Alternative Energy Store for US 570

<http://store.altenergystore.com/Wind-Systems/Wind-Turbines-Electric/Southwest-Windpower-Turbines-Parts/Air-X-Wind-Electric-Turbines/Southwest-Wind-Power-Air-X-Wind-Turbine-Land-400W-12V/p1429/>

and has his electrician cousin wire the PV panel into the air-x, using it's built in charge controller. He wants to go cheap on the battery but knows that a good battery is cheaper than two tanks. He decides on the PV-U1, from lmr batteries

<http://www.lmrbatteries.com/pvu1.html>

for US 116; this being the cheapest sealed, deep discharge, gel filled (zero maintenance) lead acid battery made by a specialist company.

Even after all this he realizes he can reliably run nothing in his house more powerful than a fan. Disgusted, he buys three more batteries, three more panels, and one more air-x. He then buys a xantrex (trace) DR1524 (1500 watt 24volt inverter) from Oasis Montana for 900 US plus shipping (these things are HEAVY)

<http://www.oasismontana.com/Trace-DR.html>

and a Vestfrost energy efficient fridge from Oasis Montana for 1150 US plus shipping.

<http://www.conservrefrigerators.com/conserv.html>

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OTC has spent over 5500 US including shipping and has electricity to power one fridge and occasionally a few other small appliances if he's careful.

Now boys and girls what have we learned? (Several hands go up) Yes Bush Tea.

That it doesn't make economic sense? Yes. From a profit and loss standpoint there is little profit.

Just like hospitals, the military and hurricane shutters gather little profit – however life can get pretty interesting without them – because there always comes a day you need them.

So let me repeat. Short term economic benefit – zero. Long term survival? Very useful. An ounce of prevention . . .

• **Keith Headley** // [May 21, 2008 at 10:37 AM](#)

Ok tried to put in a very long post and nothing happened. Will try again . . .

• **Keith Headley** // [May 21, 2008 at 10:52 AM](#)

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[Parts/Air-X-Wind-Electric-Turbines/Southwest-Wind-Power-Air-X-Wind-Turbine-Land-400W-12V/p1429/](http://store.altenergystore.com/Wind-Systems/Wind-Turbines-Electric/Southwest-Windpower-Turbines-Parts/Air-X-Wind-Electric-Turbines/Southwest-Wind-Power-Air-X-Wind-Turbine-Land-400W-12V/p1429/)

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• **Keith Headley** // [May 21, 2008 at 10:58 AM](#)

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more to follow . . .

• **Keith Headley** // [May 21, 2008 at 11:02 AM](#)

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So let me repeat. Short term economic benefit – zero. Long term survival? Very useful. An ounce of

prevention . . .

• **Keith Headley** // [May 21, 2008 at 11:11 AM](#)

OK, I had to take out all the urls to get that post to work.
here they are again

<http://www.bitterrootsolar.com/solar/bp585.htm>

<http://store.altenergystore.com/Wind-Systems/Wind-Turbines-Electric/Southwest-Windpower-Turbines-Parts/Air-X-Wind-Electric-Turbines/Southwest-Wind-Power-Air-X-Wind-Turbine-Land-400W-12V/p1429/>

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<http://www.conservrefrigerators.com/conserv.html>

Next I'll ask the moderators to delete the second instance of the repeated post – computer hung and when I went back to the page it wasn't there so I tried again . . .

You can also delete these las couple paragraphs too once you're done . .

• **Thewhiterabbit** // [May 22, 2008 at 8:44 AM](#)

The responses to my earlier posting advocating geothermal sources for energy have suffered from the KISS principle, Keep It Simple, Stupid! One need only look at Mr. Headley's posts to see that photovoltaic power is a high-tech solution to a low-tech problem. One needs a degree in electrical engineering at the very least to even read the words, let alone understand what they mean, let even further alone the ability to put the technology in place. Mr. Headly states, and then quickly ignores, the most telling point. Power companies like geothermal because it is so similar to conventional generation. This fact means that it is cheap to install, cheap to operate, and cheap to maintain. All components are off-the-shelf, meaning no need for massive research and development of technology. Thewhiterabbit grants that start-up costs for geothermal are higher than average for us because we have to install undersea cables to transmit the power. One suspects that undersea power cables are somewhat less expensive than what Mr. Headley suggested, but still a cost. Nonetheless, the source is cheap, convenient, and easily maintained, as compared to probable maintenance costs for any high-tech application. This writer suspects that cost of installation of off-shore wind turbines in our deep waters would be quite prohibitive.

Mr. Bush tea suggests that oil will continue through the roof in price and soon be unavailable. Unfortunately, the real figures for oil do not support those notions at all. The current high prices reflect manipulation of the commodities exchange much more than any real shortage. The more telling point, however, is Mr. Bush tea's admonition that we need to keep everything under our own control, i.e. Barbados vs St. Lucia vs St. Vincent, or whatever. Strange that Nevis is going to sell its cheap geothermal power to nearby islands and Dominica intends to sell to Martinique and Guadeloupe, both Departments of France, not even English-speaking, god forbid!!!! Thewhiterabbit suggests, most humbly, that if we little islands hereabouts don't get our act together and get together we will be easily and very quickly consumed by the world of globalization. You really think that we 270,000 can stand alone in the face what is happening across the whole world? After all the purchases here by our southern neighbor I have already begun calling us TT&B. United we stand, divided we fall, its very simple, KISS.



• **David** // [May 25, 2008 at 1:26 PM](#)

Check out this interesting [link](#)!

• **Sam Gamgee** // [May 26, 2008 at 6:00 PM](#)

Saw the paper today Bu. Is it because of the prompting here that we are hearing something good about Solar Dynamics and Light & Power?



• **David** // [May 26, 2008 at 6:45 PM](#)

Sam Gamgee we read the report with interest and we wish the country well with this initiative. We hope that it not another situation where some people who think that they are important are blowing hot air.

Did we understand the BL&P people to be saying that the company is not in a position to integrate the technology which would see John Citizen selling electricity back to them?

It is mind boggling that after all these years we have to start from almost a dead stop on the issue of finding a sustainable alternative energy source.

- **Straight talk** // [May 27, 2008 at 4:49 AM](#)

David:

The negative attitude of BL&P in the face of a possible national emergency is as typical as it is worrying.

To see how a can-do government approaches the same problem click this:-

<http://www.gosolarontario.ca/>

- **Questions for BL&P** // [May 27, 2008 at 7:27 PM](#)

Straight Talk,

David is overwhelmed with BL&P. The fact that the marketing manager responds to him with prepared texts is very impressive to him and the BU household.

But I would like BL&P to explain as ROBOT ask, why they need a marketing department when, by law, all of us HAVE to buy their product. Is this just a PR ploy to cover up their weak management?

I would like to know how they managed to justify this department, but have nothing in place to deal with alternative energy options.

We want to know...
What exactly is the role of the holding company that they formed? It sounds like a slush fund.

How come it is 'staffed' with all the old retired executives?

Is it true that ALL the retired managers over the last 20 years are still on staff?

Have they been collecting salaries as well as pensions?
Are they ALSO paid as consultants?

What happened to the sign in Bay Street about building a restaurant? What have been produced so far by this holding company to benefit consumers? How much has it cost to date?

David, you think you can get your friend to answer these questions before the really hard ones come?



• **David** // [May 27, 2008 at 7:33 PM](#)

Questions for BL&P ~ we are aware that Mr. Worme when he responds to us will be operating in the interest of his employer. We listened to Mr. Worme on a VOB program today hosted by Mr. Ellis which discussed many of the issues which we have already discussed on BU. Kudos to David Ellis even though he is playing catch-up. maybe someday he et al with have the guts to credit the blogs for energizing them to some of the issues.

Mr. Worme has been kind to respond to us in the past however it does look like the BL&P has changed its communications policy.

• **Keith Headley** // [May 29, 2008 at 10:05 AM](#)

You have to understand BL&P's position. Without a government subsidy, renewable energy will mean a fall in profits.

I think they should manufacture (assemble) the panels – there's a worldwide shortage you know. If they're desperate, they can even lease them to customers, rather than selling them with and appropriate maintenance contract.

There are possibilities – few are interested in them because it means changing Barbados forever . . .

• **Keith Headley** // [May 29, 2008 at 10:10 AM](#)

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• **David** // [June 7, 2008 at 8:22 AM](#)

Recently we have heard James 'Mr.Solar' Husbands preaching the urgency for Barbados to pursue an alternate energy program. in rebuttal we heard Mr. Stephen Worme of the Barbados Light & Power positing the argument that natural gas is a cheaper option i.e. we can tap in on the T&T source. We are getting a little tired of the options which are pinned to finite energy sources with a relationship to fossil.

Against this background we have to congratulate little St. Kitts who with the help of the Taiwanese have proactively embarked on a project to reduce its dependence on oil as an energy source.

[St. Kitts looks to solar energy to relieve high energy costs](#)

By
Reporter-SKNVibes.com

Ryan

Haas

Control Center for the solar panel BASSETERRE, ST. KITTS-THE largest solar panel ever built by the government was completed this week and David Lee, a specialist contracted by the Taiwanese government to supervise its construction, said that if this test panel is successful, an increased use of solar energy may be in the future of St. Kitts & Nevis.

"This is the first case of collaboration like this between St. Kitts and Taiwan, and I hope this first test will not be the last," said Lee, who works as an aircraft technician in his home country. "Solar power would reduce the energy costs of government and private households dramatically."

The panel, which measures 480 square feet, was constructed on the roof of the St. Kitts Information and Communications (ICT) Center, Bay Road, Basseterre and according to the technician, can generate as much as 10 kilowatts of power in a single hour when running at maximum capacity.

The solar panel is estimated to produce 40 kilowatts of energy per day, enough to fully power as many as three homes, and Lee opined that it should be powerful enough to meet most of the energy needs of the ICT Center.

The technician also suggested that solar power is a good alternative energy choice for the Caribbean because the amount of solar radiation generated in this part of the world is much higher than in many other areas.

"Solar energy is also one of the best alternative energy sources because there are no moving parts, it creates no noise and produces no carbon emissions. It is a completely 'green' alternative to petroleum," Lee informed.

He stated that the cost of solar panels for the private consumer remains quite high, however, with the average home owner requiring a 3 kilowatt panel to meet his/her energy needs. Lee said that type of technology could cost about US \$30,000.

"The cost of solar panels can be dependent on a government's renewable energy policy. Many governments with these policies will pay for 40-50 % of the installation cost or they may offer tax breaks.

"We hope that this test panel will be successful and St. Kitts will approve a solar energy policy like those of Taiwan, Japan and Germany so we can keep this country beautiful," Lee said.

In addition to converting the sun's light into electricity, Lee told SKNVibes.com that the polycrystalline cells of the solar panel were strategically placed over the main classroom of the ICT Center, providing shade and further reducing the cooling costs of the building.



• **David** // [June 8, 2008 at 2:32 PM](#)

It was with a large measure of sadness that we listened to a VOB produced programme this afternoon featuring alternate energy. David Ellis after reading BU went to the UWI to inquire what has happened since Professor Headley's death i.e. who has carried on the pioneering work in the field of solar energy. The answer from a Professor Leo Moseley was NOTHING. We wonder what Principal Sir Hillary has to say about this as he continues on his quest to put a management guru, accountant and some other in every home by 2010. Whether the engineers?

Statistics can be a nasty business. Keith Headley has David Ellis contacted you to try to establish the search for alternate energy with blood line? 😊

• **Rick** // [August 29, 2008 at 11:33 AM](#)

<http://fieldmus.digitalzones.com/matchpoint-sex-scene.html>



arrendund // [May 20, 2009 at 10:37 PM](#)

Super web site,, i will visit once again.

Nigel Hoyte // [June 2, 2009 at 3:54 PM](#)

I am Bajan living in Barbados and a renewable energy student with training in photovoltaic and a member of the ISSES .I would very much like to get in touch with Keith Headley to continue this topic.



← [Barack Obama's Run For POTUS](#) [The Zimbabwe Election And The Democratic Process](#) →

Barbados Needs National Energy Policy, NOW!

March 27, 2008 · 33 Comments

The Democratic Labour Party (DLP) pledged to Barbadians that within the first 100 days of assuming the reigns of government, it would roll-out several major initiatives. Our commonsense, which has been honed over the years through observation, tells us that the pledge was part of a gimmick which political parties are expected to engage at election time. It should be obvious that a political party in opposition is not equipped to deliver on promises made, simply because it is not in the obvious position of government to efficiently plan and allocate resources. The BU household continue to be amazed at the frenzy which is demonstrated by our educated public concerning trivial matters, whenever we have elections. Following the script to the letter, the opposition Barbados Labour Party (BLP) has reminded the government of its 100 day promise, we listened to Senator Liz Thompson doing so with her usual eloquence in the Senate yesterday. **It's funny that the only time the Senator's eloquence eluded her was during the no-confidence motion over the Hardwood affair last year.**

Often times BU try to examine events occurring on the world stage and using our simple analysis relate it to what is happening in our backyard. One of the promises, or should we say priorities of this government is to reduce the cost of living. It was a recurring theme on the DLP platform leading up to the last general election. Of course many of us questioned what significant influence any government of Barbados can have

on the cost of living in Barbados. Our skepticism was induced by the rising cost of living in the global economy which continues unabated as we write. **The main cause being suggested by analysts is the runaway price of oil which has skyrocketed to over USD100 a barrel in recent months.** Of note should be that the government of Barbados continues to subsidize the cost of petrol at USD65. If this was the only factor influencing rising prices then the current strategy of subsidization could be excused.

We asked in an earlier [blog](#) what tangible benefit could have been derived by the three Caribbean Prime Ministers (including David Thompson) who recently met with the lame duck President of the USA, George Bush in Washington. Despite our best effort we have not read any detail report of what was discussed outside of the powdery language used to describe the visit. **We wonder if the current US strategy of using corn to fuel its Ethanol Fuel Program as an alternative to gasoline would have been discussed.**

How is this relevant you ask?

According to data widely available to quote our [source](#), despite being a well intentioned program i.e. using ethanol as an alternative for gas, the approach will have major negative repercussions to the World Economy.

Corn is the most widely produced feed grain in the United States, accounting for more than 90 percent of total value and production of feed grains. Around 80 million acres of land are planted to corn... Most of the crop is used as the main energy ingredient in livestock feed. Corn is also processed into a multitude of food and industrial products including starch, sweeteners, corn oil, beverage and industrial alcohol, and fuel ethanol. The United States is a major player in the world corn trade market, with approximately 20 percent of the corn crop exported to other countries.

Related Links

[Prime Minister David Thompson's Day Of Reckoning On The Horizon](#)

[Barbados Cannot Sustain Current Level Of Subsidies](#)

[The Cost of Living In Barbados](#)

[Price Control By Another Name?](#)

[Residential Electricity Costs To Be Subsidised](#)

[Cost Of Living in Barbados Out Of Control Like A Runaway Freight Train](#)

Barbados should take careful note that the Americans are pursuing alternative sources of energy which is not limited to its Ethanol Fuel Program. In an earlier [blog](#) we touched on their flirtation with wind and solar power as well. Why is it that Barbados continue to pay lip service to pursuing a more aggressive alternative energy program? Our criticism can be easily directed at our Caribbean neighbours. Is it not obvious that a sustainable approach to reducing the cost of living is to reduce the cost of energy by developing alternatives? In the face of all the economic partnership agreements we have already signed, and others to follow, it is impossible to shield our small and vulnerable economies to the external shocks of the global market. The onslaught of WTO rules makes a mockery of the token offerings we have been hearing from our regional leaders, including Prime Minister Thompson. We reiterate that a more tangible pursuit is to engineer an alternative energy program. Fortunately for Barbados we have a budding solar energy program with home grown expertise at the ready. Secondly the bureaucratic hurdle which is currently blocking the development of wind energy should be investigated as a priority. The submission of an environmental impact study to Town Planning department by the Barbados Light & Power Company Limited concerning the Lambert Wind Farm project was highlighted by Chief Marketing Officer of the BL&P in an earlier [blog](#). Each day that passes we continue to loose our fight to maintain the standard of living we have come to enjoy.

We believe that former Deputy Governor Darcy Boyce has been given responsibility for the important energy sector. As a former Central Banker he should be well aware of the current threat to the underpinnings of the Barbados economy. Today we listened with admiration to the no-nonsense and provocative Senator McClean who tabled concerns regarding the compilation of the unemployment statistics in Barbados. It is an issue which has been flogged

in the bajan blogosphere, especially as it related to tourism statistics. It is this freshness of thought which Senator McClean seems prepared to introduce that we hope infects Minister Darcy Boyce. We could not let this opportunity go by without recognizing also that Minister McClean seems to working towards using statistics as a tool to inform decisions in another area which we have also flogged, that of monitoring the immigrant population