

Clean Energy Finance Corporation Expert Review

Submission: Armidale Air Quality Group, December 2011

Are there principles beyond financial viability that could be used to prioritise investments, such as emissions impact or demonstration affect?

Air pollution and other environmental impacts need to be considered as well as financial viability when prioritising projects. Most people agree that solar photovoltaic, solar thermal,, wind, geothermal and wave power are clean renewable technologies which are crucial to avoid climate change[1]. Priority should be given to projects which implement safeguards to minimise impacts on the environment due to manufacturing and building, and which use existing renewable energy in manufacturing, other factors being equal.

Renewable energy does not imply non-polluting, although most people think of it that way. It is not clear from the CEF website to what extent biomass is included, but biomass, and in particular woody biomass, is the elephant in the room, and needs to be considered carefully.. Inefficiencies in combustion of biomass cause fine particle emissions which are now well-known to be hazardous to health [2]. Time is also an important factor in the growth of biomass, as well as the impact on biodiversity and soil carbon [3, 4]

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References

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