**John Baldwin, MD CNG Services Ltd interviewed on Sky News by Charlotte Hawkins on Tuesday 11 Dec 2012**


**Charlotte**: John Baldwin is Chairman of the Renewable Energy Association Biogas Group, he joins us live from central London. Good morning to you, where do you stand on this?

**John:** I am very supportive, because we do need natural gas and we are going to be importing it from Russia and Qatar, which is very expensive and we can't really afford to carry on doing that and, at the same time, fund the things that I work on such as wind and anaerobic digestion.

**Charlotte:** What about those environmental concerns, there are worries that it causes earthquakes? There are also worries about what chemicals are put into drinking water.

**John:** I think others have looked at this, and there's pretty much a clean bill of health in the UK regime. So the Environment Agency, the Health and Safety Executive, you heard Tim Yeo, people who are doing the analysis of the facts, are saying there is nothing wrong with it. On the contrary, it's going to be good, because it will provide the funds the UK needs to move to a low-carbon economy.


**Charlotte**: Although, there are recent reports on fracking, from the European commission, and they're warning about the high risks of ground and surface water contamination, noxious air emissions, risks to biodiversity and noise pollution. Should that be taken into account?

**John:** I think it has to be properly regulated, but those are also slightly old complaints about Shale, from some bad practices maybe 5 or 6 years ago in the US. The Environment Agency in the UK has reviewed the Shale techniques and have said that if it's regulated properly – which it will be - there are no risks to the environment. There's no risk of earthquakes, there are no risks of contamination.

**Charlotte:** But there are those who are saying that this is a bit of a dash for gas and in the fact that we are so keen to look for other sources of energy, that actually the risks haven't actually been properly looked into.

**John:** Well, I think that's a bit of a misunderstanding. I'm in London today and I look out of your office window, and there is no wind at all. And so all the electricity we have from wind just doesn't exist and it has to come from somewhere. So where are we getting this energy from? We have to get it from gas. The gas can come from Russia, or it can come from Lancashire. The great thing about getting the gas from Lancashire, is that if we pay £10 billion pounds for that gas, £5 or £6 billion pounds will come back . That £5 or £6 billion pounds, we can use to insulate houses, to build anaerobic digesters,

which is what I work in, to build wind turbines. If we give that £10 billion pounds to Russia, they are not going to pay any UK tax.


**Charlotte:** Why do you think though, if it is such a great thing to happen in the point of view of getting new sources, that more countries aren't on board with this? France banned it, some states in the US have banned it. It seems that it is just us and Poland that are on board with it.

**John:** I think you have to look on a planetary scale, there is a big battle going on between coal and gas and the coal industry is bigger than the gas industry. And what's happening is that Shale gas is threatening to demolish the coal industry. The coal industry is just not going to be able to compete, and coal is going to have to stay underground - out of harms way. What you've got is a huge lobbying effort by the coal industry to say that shale gas causes more pollution than coal, which is manifest nonsense.


**Charlotte:** But what about the fact that this is going to prevent us from looking for other sources of renewable energy. Because, this is going to run out at some point, don't we need to be looking at the bigger picture?

**John:** I think we do, but I think we use the revenue from the Shale gas taxation to insulate houses, so I'd like to see a target that by 2030, every single house in Blackpool, in Preston and in all Lancashire is insulated. Reducing the gas demand by 50 %, which reduces the greenhouse gases associated with that and that's the way to do it.


**Charlotte:** What about those people who are living in the area, for example those people who have a house in Blackpool and are thinking, 'Well actually, I'm not sure I want the risk of an earthquake on my doorstep, just for this.'

**John:** I think, as I have explained before, people have looked into this, and there is no risk of earthquakes if it is regulated properly, which it will be in the UK. An earthquake, that is, that makes any difference – if a bus drives past your house you get a little shudder, you occasionally get them, but that is not an earthquake.

**Charlotte**: Is this all just being done to bring down bills at the end of the day though, there is a lot of pressure on household bills at the moment. Is this a factor in it?

**John;** I think it obviously will bring down bills, there was a report yesterday by Ofgem's consultant Poyry, which talked about a £10 billion reduction in prices, which is welcome. But I don't think it is necessarily about that, I thinks it's about the fact that if we produce our own gas we can raise taxes from the people who produce it. We can use that taxation, to reduce demand for gas, to run buses. I'm in London and there is not one bus in London running on natural gas, they should all run on natural gas.

**Charlotte**: There are also doubts about just how much gas can be extracted from this, are we throwing an awful lot of money at something that at the end of the day, might not even work that well?

**John:** Well, I don't think we are throwing any money away, because I think the idea to let investors make the investment, if they're clever enough to drill, frack, produce gas and make profits and give the taxpayer half of it, that's good luck to them. If they drill, frack and don't produce any gas, they don't pay any tax, but the taxpayer won't have paid them any money.

**Charlotte:** Ok, well that's John Baldwin Chairman of the Renewable Energy Association Biogas Group. Thank you for joining us.

**John:** Thank you.