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The Campaign for Daylight Saving

The Campaign for Daylight Saving

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Lighter Evenings
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The Campaign for Daylight Saving

THE PROPOSAL

For the UK to introduce Daylight Saving for a three year trial period in order to make better use of the daylight hours that the country receives.

This would mean moving the clocks two hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) in the Summer (GMT+2) and one hour ahead of GMT in the Winter (GMT+1).

THE OUTCOME

Moving to Daylight Saving means that the UK would have lighter evenings all year round. This would provide considerable environmental, road safety, health and leisure advantages that would significantly outweigh the disadvantages of darker mornings.

BENEFITS OF MOVING TO DAYLIGHT SAVING

Environmental

Peak electricity demand in the UK is between 4-7pm in the evening when people arrive home from work and prepare the evening meal. The level of power demand is heightened when this peak period occurs during the hours of darkness as it requires inefficient and high-cost power stations to come on-stream to provide the additional power supply.

Changing to Daylight Saving would:

- Reduce peak evening demand, saving 2.78 million MWhs per annum
- Reduce the UK's carbon emissions by 1.2 million tonnes per annum.
- Reduce family fuel bills and help reduce fuel poverty for the elderly.

(Daylight Saving in GB; the Case for Institutional Innovation, Brendan Cronin and Elizabeth Garnsey, Cambridge University 2007)

Road Safety

UK road accident rates rise after the clocks change in October when visibility and weather conditions begin to worsen. Yet, when the Government adopted Daylight Saving in 1968-71, 2500 deaths and serious injuries were prevented in each year.

The reason for this is that more accidents occur in the afternoon rush hour because motorists are more tired at that time of day, children tend to socialise in the afternoon rather than going straight home and more social trips take place in the afternoon.

Changing to Daylight Saving would:

- Result in a reduction of approximately 82 deaths and 202 serious injuries on UK roads each year.
- Protect vulnerable road users such as cyclists and motorcyclists by making them more visible to motorists.
- Reduce the number of children killed or injured on UK roads

(pers. com., Transport Research Foundation, December 2008)

Health

Government studies estimate that, by 2050, 60% of men and 50% of women could be clinically obese. This has significant public health and cost implications as obesity is a major contributing factor to diabetes, heart disease and cancer.

However, the ability to reduce obesity rates through increasing outdoor and leisure activity is limited because half of the 10 most popular sports are daylight dependent and the number of available evening daylight hours restricted.

Changing to Daylight Saving would:

- Provide an average of 55 minutes of extra accessible daylight in the evenings.
- Help tackle obesity by allowing more time for people to undertake outdoor leisure and physical activity.
- Increase participation levels in sport.

Leisure and Tourism

Leisure and tourism is the UK's fifth largest industry generating £86bn in revenue each year. Studies show that the majority of visits to National Trust sites, leisure parks and attractions are in the afternoon after people have undertaken activities such as shopping and work commitments.

As such, leisure day visits, which constitute around 50% of tourism expenditure, are constrained by the hours of available daylight and would benefit from lighter evenings.

Changing to Daylight Saving would:

- Contribute to the expansion of domestic tourism and attract more visitors to the UK from overseas
- Boost the UK's leisure and tourism earnings by up to £3.5bn per annum
- Increase sectoral employment by up to 80,000 Full Time Equivalents

(The Likely Impact on Tourist Activity in the UK of the Adoption of Daylight Saving, Dr. Mayer Hillman, Policy Studies Institute 2008)

SCOTLAND

In the past, concern has been expressed about Daylight Saving in Scotland where its introduction would mean that it will be darker for longer in the winter mornings. Some felt that the benefits of earlier sunrise times in winter outweighed the benefits of longer periods of daylight in the afternoon.

However, Scotland will actually be the main beneficiary of Daylight Saving due to the reduction in the number of road accidents and more available daylight leisure hours.

Nevertheless, any trial of Daylight Saving should include an opt-out clause for Scotland. There are many countries and states around the world that have more than one time zone and this is not a significant issue.