

Zurich, October 15, 2014

Ms. Lorna Greening  
Editor, Energy Policy

Dear Ms. Lorna Greening,

With this letter we would like to express our concern about the direction the editorial management of *Energy Policy* has recently taken. As scholars working in the fields of energy innovation, energy policy and energy transition, we take a high interest in your journal. Many articles important to our research have appeared in *Energy Policy* and most of us regularly publish in, and review for, it. *Energy Policy* is an important journal and one of the few in the energy domain devoting ample space to a broad range of contributions from the social sciences.

However, we are concerned about a recently installed editorial practice. From our own experience as well as discussions with colleagues, we understand that there is no second round of revisions any more.

We are afraid that this puts both scientific quality and the efforts of authors and reviewers at risk. Let us explain our concerns.

In our experience, it is quite common that, in a first round, reviewers will ask for major revisions. After substantial rewriting of the respective paper by the authors in terms of content, structure or both, reviewers are invited for a second round of reviews. Almost inevitably, they will come back with further, minor issues, which require another revision by the author(s). Of course, we describe a case here, in which the original submission is of decent quality, original and promising.

However, with the new practices such a second revision is not possible any more. As a consequence, an increasing number of manuscripts are now being rejected even though just minor revisions would make them suitable for publication. In our view, this is an unfortunate waste of the efforts of both authors and reviewers.

As reviewers, these new practices leave us little room for action: Either we accept what we get after the first revision or we will de facto reject a paper, which we believed to have potential in the first place – otherwise we would have rejected it right away.

For us as authors there is now a strong incentive to incorporate every reviewer's suggestion – even if we disagree or if there are contradictions among the reviewers – as a risk-averse strategy to minimize the chance of comments and potential rejection in a second round.

We write this email in our role as members of the steering group of the STRN network, a network of 800+ academics working in the field of sustainability transition studies, for which studies on energy policy, new energy technologies and sectoral change in the energy sector are a core topic ([www.transitionsnetwork.org](http://www.transitionsnetwork.org)).

We are looking forward to your response and will be happy to discuss this with you in further detail.

With kind regards,

Jochen Markard, ETH Zurich (contact person)  
& Bernhard Truffer, Eawag and Utrecht University

Co-signing members of the STRN steering board (in alphabetical order):

Flor Avelino, University of Rotterdam

Frank Geels, Manchester University

John Grin, VU University Amsterdam

Marko Hekkert, Utrecht University

Jonathan Köhler, ISI Karlsruhe

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