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Y Gweinidog Newid Hinsawdd
Minister for Climate Change



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref DC/JJ/01824/23

[Personal Information S40]
Extinction Rebellion Cymru Political Engagement Team

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17 July 2023

Dear [Personal Information S40],

Thank you for your email of 20 June requesting a meeting to discuss the outcome of the Aberpergwm Colliery Judicial Review, other matters relating to coal in Wales, and Net Zero Wales.

We share your concerns around the climate emergency and the impact of domestic fossil fuel production. This is why in December 2018 we issued our [Petroleum Policy Statement](#) confirming that we will not undertake new petroleum licensing in Wales, followed in March 2021 by our [Coal Policy Statement](#) with a strong presumption against coal extraction. Wales is currently the only UK country with a published policy position of presuming against petroleum and coal extraction. Since the devolution of petroleum and coal licensing functions to Wales in 2018, the number of petroleum licences in Wales has reduced from 13 to 6 (with none in production), whilst the number of active coal licences has reduced from 5 to 2 since 2020.

Welsh Government has a statutory duty to manage licences that were issued by the UK Government before 2018 in accordance with the model clauses incorporated into the licence, applicable legislation, and with the general principles of public law. With regards to the Aberpergwm licence and Judicial Review, the judge found that Welsh Ministers did not have the power to intervene in the de-conditioning of the pre-devolution licence. As you may be aware this matter is now subject to an appeal and so we cannot comment further on the ongoing legal case, and this further prevents me from meeting with you at this time to discuss the points you raise.

Whereas we share your concerns about the potential impact of continued mining at Aberpergwm, we are not aware of any other mine with the licence and planning permission necessary for coal extraction.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

The Welsh Government is committed to working with the fossil fuel extraction industry on the transition to business models that are sustainable for the long term and support decarbonisation. Our efforts as a Government are focused on making the transition to net zero a just transition, where the costs and benefits are shared fairly across our society. The Welsh Government is clear the path to decarbonisation puts the welfare of our people, the health of our economy, and the protection and enhancement of our natural environment front and centre. We are in a climate and nature emergency and the response must be swift and serious, so we can pass on a Wales we are proud of to future generations.

With regards to the UK Climate Change Committee's progress report of 6 June, I am pleased that the CCC acknowledged where we have made progress, such as on local energy planning, development of our skills plan, the "significant and laudable decisions" to change to a default 20mph speed limit and introduce environmental requirements for future road-building, and the recognition that our focus on active travel is making a difference, with Wales having committed more funding per capita to active travel than the UK Government.

I am also grateful to the committee for identifying those areas we should prioritise for further action. A series of actions have been taken forward since the report was developed which will contribute to delivering on the Committee's recommendations. Further details can be found in [my Written Statement of 9th June](#).

Whereas it would not be appropriate to discuss the ongoing judicial review, my officials are always happy to meet to discuss decarbonisation and fossil fuel policy more broadly.

Yours sincerely,



Julie James AS/MS

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