



Ein cyf/Our ref: KS/PO/83/2026

Andrew RT Davies MS
Chair
Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee

CC: Llyr Gruffydd MS
Chair
Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure Committee

12 February 2026

Dear Andrew

Thank you for your letter regarding the recent closure of Terminal 3 at Holyhead Port on 7th January 2026.

Port closures are always disruptive, and the duration of any closure has a significant bearing on the impacts felt by the local community and wider economy. I consider that the overall response to this incident in January was timely and organised. I spoke with the Port Authority following the brief closure (due to incident at Terminal 3) and will continue to do so on the basis of these conversations, I am currently assured of the integrity of the port and its services.

My announcement of the Irish Sea taskforce followed the temporary closure of Holyhead port following damage to its berthing infrastructure inflicted by Storm Darragh in December 2024. Members of the Irish and Welsh Governments, transport officials and stakeholders worked collaboratively on a systematic and thorough review of what had been learned.

As you know, the published recommendations outline how to achieve improved resilience, deliver better contingency plans that will protect connectivity for passengers and improve how disruption is managed. There is now a commitment from all of the Welsh Ports involved in the Task Force that, when dealing with an incident, they will inform Governments and the core taskforce membership group as quickly as possible and continue to share communication in a timely manner until normal operations resume.

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Gohebiaeth.Ken.Skates@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Ken.Skates@gov.wales

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 work of the taskforce was reflected in the response to the January incident, with the Port Authority communicating with key stakeholders and the Welsh Government in a timely manner, ensuring the effective dissemination of key information.

On 21 January the Port authority issued a confidential update on Terminal 5 to a small group of stakeholders, myself included. I am now able to share that the Port Authority's detailed structural engineering assessments have confirmed that remedial works are required, and upgrades will be undertaken to improve the resilience of the Port. Terminal 5, which was scheduled for significant resilience upgrades before the December 2025 incident, is due to receive a complete replacement of the fendering systems on both berths, involving the removal of 40-tonne steel panels and installation of large energy-absorbing cone systems supported by heavy-duty chains. The Port Authority will replace all 13 cones, chains and panels on both Terminal 3 and 5, additionally fitting hundreds of sacrificial zinc anodes to the underwater structure of both berths and central columns as part of the life extension.

The Port Authority is combining its remediation and enhancement work streams into a unified programme to make best use of the down time of Terminal 5. As a result, Terminal 5 will not be available before Easter 2026, however it is expected to be operational during the high-season period. Until then all services will continue to operate from Terminal 3. I have been reassured that new contingency plans have also been developed by the Port Authority to ensure the continuity of operations whilst only a single Terminal is open.

I understand that the Marine Accident Investigation Branch will report on both of the recent incidents in due course and that the Maritime and Coastguard Agency is due to conduct a port health check later this year under the Port Marine Safety Code, which will further independently assess the integrity of the Port and its services.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ken Skates', with a large, stylized flourish extending to the right.

Ken Skates AS/MS

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Drafnidiaeth a Gogledd Cymru
Cabinet Secretary for Transport and North Wales