

Lesley Griffiths AC/AM
Gweinidog yr Amgylchedd, Ynni a Materion Gwledig
Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-928
Ein cyf/Our ref LG/07371/19

Janet Finch-Saunders AM
Chair of the Petitions Committee

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19 November 2019

Dear Janet

Thank you for your letter on 6 November, regarding the Welsh National Marine Plan petition.

We published the first Welsh National Marine Plan on 12 November, setting out the Welsh Government's policy for the next 20 years for the sustainable development of our seas. The Marine Plan includes provisions relating to both devolved and retained functions.

The Welsh National Marine Plan identifies the deployment of marine renewable technology as a strategic priority. Renewable energy remains part of our vision for a more sustainable future for Wales. To deliver and secure affordable low carbon energy, we need a mix of different technologies and sizes, from community scale to major projects and we will work with our stakeholders to find ways of ensuring the transition to low carbon energy happens in Wales.

Since last year's public consultation on the draft Welsh National Marine Plan, my officials reviewed the plan to reflect our policy to avoid the continued extraction of fossil fuels onshore and in internal waters, where licensing is devolved to Welsh Government. Welsh Government is committed to moving to a low carbon energy system, with the long-term aim of removing fossil fuels from the energy mix whilst minimising adverse economic impact and providing clarity for investors, encouraging investment in lower carbon alternatives.

The licensing of offshore petroleum exploration and extraction is a retained function, with licensing and environmental regulation administered by the UK Oil and Gas Authority and the Offshore Petroleum Regulator for Environment and Decommissioning respectively.

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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.

In my Oral Statement to the Senedd I made it clear there are contrasting areas between Welsh Government and UK Government policy – one of which being the extraction of oil and gas. Welsh Government policy is designed to avoid further extraction and consumption of fossil fuels within all areas for which we have responsibility. We completely oppose any extraction of fossil fuels in the seas surrounding Wales.

The Welsh National Marine Plan, therefore, also includes a clause specifying any proposals to extract oil and gas within the offshore area which require infrastructure on land are required to be compatible with our decarbonisation approach, with the intention of using Welsh Government policy functions, as far as possible, to discourage offshore extraction.

I'm aware of the petition and have received correspondence from Susanna Kenyon on this.

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