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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref JJ/02872/23

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Dear Bethan,

Thank you for your letter of 23 October, regarding a ban on opencast mining in Wales. Please accept my apologies for the lateness of this reply.

On the 22 March, following public consultation, the Welsh Government published a coal policy statement which can be found on the following link: [Coal policy statement \[HTML\] | GOV.WALES](#)

As outlined in the policy statement, it is the policy of Welsh Government to bring to a managed end the extraction and use of coal. The opening of new coal mines or the extension of existing coaling operations in Wales would add to the global supply of coal, having a significant effect on Wales' and the UK's legally binding carbon budgets as well as international efforts to limit the impact of climate change.

The Coal Policy states that only in wholly exceptional circumstances would Welsh Government consider the further extraction of coal. Each proposal would be considered on its individual merits, but must clearly demonstrate:

- Why the extraction is required to support industrial non-energy generating uses for coal.
- Why the extraction is needed in the context of decarbonisation and climate change emission reductions targets, or to ensure the safe winding-down of mining operations or site remediation.
- How the extraction contributes to Welsh prosperity and our role as a globally responsible Wales.

The position in Planning Policy Wales (PPW) is that coaling operations proposed for energy generation should not be permitted, unless there are wholly exceptional circumstances. Such circumstances would need to demonstrate that coal is both needed in the context of climate change emissions reductions and for energy security reasons. Whilst PPW acknowledges that proposals for industrial uses of coal should be considered on their merits local or community benefits would need to clearly outweigh the disbenefits of the likely impacts of the proposal.

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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.

Decisions will be made on the specific circumstances of each case based on its climate impact, with the presumption being against extraction.

In terms of a ban, whereas our objective is to stop the extraction and consumption of coal, we also have a duty to manage the safe closure and restoration of existing and historic mining infrastructure. The incidental extraction of limited coal may also be required during the construction of infrastructure projects. Therefore, coal licences may be needed in wholly exceptional circumstances and each application will be decided on its own merits, but the presumption will always be against coal extraction.

Regarding Scotland, on 10 November 2021 the Scottish Parliament set out proposed planning policies including no support for the exploration, development and production of fossil fuels, other than in exceptional circumstances aligned with national policy on energy and climate. This preferred policy position is subject to statutory and other assessments before the policy-making process can be completed. The proposed Scottish position is essentially the same as the Welsh position, which has been in place since March 2021.

Welsh Government has adopted and implemented the strongest policy opposition to coal extraction across the UK Governments.

Yours sincerely,



Julie James AS/MS
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