



Sent via email

Vaughan Gething MS, Minister for Economy
Julie James MS, Minister for Climate Change
Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff CF99 1SN

28th April 2022

Dear Vaughan and Julie,

It was good to see you and the rest of the Welsh Labour government at the Party's conference back in March.

Coming away from Llandudno our union, and I, felt very clearly that when the movement can unite around a clear and progressive vision and when we have determined political leadership, we can still deliver for our people, even in the most trying of circumstances.

It was also good to share a platform with you both to discuss how we can collectively reduce our carbon emissions in a way that has labour values and social justice at its heart. It was heartening to find myself agreeing with a government on how this should be approached.

As one of our delegates pointed from the conference rostrum; as an energy union we remember the pain and broken promises from the destruction of the Welsh coalfield. As a union which represents industries as broad as shipbuilding, textiles and Remploy our members know what it's like when politicians carry out policies without workers at the front of their attentions.

We cannot make the mistakes of the past. Nor those in our recent history. The renewables industry in Scotland is a totem to the political failure with the government's policies have neither supported environmentalism nor a workers' agenda.

The promises made by Scottish government of thousands of green jobs never materialised. And even though there are more orders for renewables components that ever, right now they are being placed offshore to the lowest bidder. These are then shipped to Scotland at enormous carbon costs while fabrication yards and our steel works lie empty.

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Just days after we packed up in Llandudno we heard Lamprell, a UAE based fabricator, took hundreds of thousands of pounds order to supply over 60-turbine jackets for Moray West, and has signed a Memorandum of Understanding for the fabrication work with US developer NOV in potentially securing another £10 billion of work on floating wind projects again off the coast of Scotland.

GMB know you are keen to avoid same failures in securing jobs in Wales. As you look to expand renewable power I know that Welsh Labour ministers will use every avenue possible to ensure that jobs are secured in the UK for the production, sourcing and servicing of new renewables.

It was clear to me from the conference fringe that Welsh government do not have all the levers needed to mandate some of these aims, and with the Tories in Westminster right now it is unlikely that we will see the UK government devolving more powers to the Senedd.

As Welsh Labour looks to partner with one of the big renewables, I wanted to offer GMB's assistance to do everything we can do to enforce the need for domestic content in the production and servicing of renewables.

We had initial discussions with Vaughan about the possibility of a roundtable hosted by the Welsh Government with some of the big renewables and energy unions so we can knock some heads together to ensure that the green jobs revolution becomes a reality.

We are keen to play our part and eager to see these talks to come to fruition, so please feel free to contact us at any point for any help or support to put these talks together. We are also keen to discuss the possibility of New Nuclear developments in Wales.

Whilst we are pleased that the UK government has finally committed to new nuclear, we have huge reservations on the government's determination to deliver a programme on the scale that will secure Britain's energy future.

A few weeks back I was at Hinkley Point C in Bridgwater, where the project is facing delays due to labour shortages, and from what I understand the Tories in Westminster are slow to respond to the need.

At Hinkley Point there is a skilled workforce, with thousands of workers from Wales already working on the project. There are demands for more.

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There is the very real prospect of good quality, well paid jobs in this sector. Jobs that have a long shelf life and depending on how much determination the UK government has, jobs that could mean a career path for life for some workers.

The opportunity for new nuclear is one too good to miss, with more workers needed at Hinkley point as we speak, and with the potential for more at Sizewell C, Wylfa and even Transfynydd.

We urge the Welsh Government to jump at this opportunity, invest in new nuclear and the skills needed to build, develop and maintain these plants, both inside and across the UK. We would be happy to work on any bids, provide any expertise or support to make these projects a reality.

Indeed, we already have a close working relationship with EDF at Hinkley point which could prove fruitful in helping develop this strategy.

To summarise, we are keen to do whatever we can to make sure that workers in Wales have the best deal. We fully believe this can only be done by delivering highly skilled unionised jobs.

We think these steps would make a major impact, but whatever we can do to make this a reality elsewhere, please do not hesitate to pick up the phone. You will have an ally in GMB.

In Solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gary Smith'.

Gary Smith
General Secretary

CC Ruth Brady, GMB Wales and South West Regional Secretary