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Dear Edward,

I am writing to outline that the Scottish Government has today confirmed its finalised policy position of no support for coal extraction in Scotland. The finalised policy position is available here: www.gov.scot/publications/coal-extraction-policy-position.

The first step in this process was the launch of a call for evidence on coal extraction which ran from 21 June to 02 August 2022, which invited stakeholders' views and expanded our evidence base in this policy area. The call for evidence set coal extraction in its wider context of our statutory emissions targets and just transition and highlighted our work to date in relevant policy areas, including energy security, heat regulation and air quality.

The responses to the call for evidence, and the independent analysis report, are both publicly available. Having considered stakeholders' views and the evidence received alongside wider Scottish Government energy and climate change policies, we confirmed our preferred policy position of no support for coal extraction in Scotland in October 2022.

The preferred policy position was subject to statutory and other assessments before the policy-making process was completed, including in our draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan, and our National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4).

NPF4 policy 1 makes clear that significant weight will be given to the global climate and nature crises when considering all development proposals. NPF4 Policy 33 sets out a policy of no support for the exploration, development and production of fossil fuels, other than in exceptional circumstances aligned with national policy on energy and targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. This includes our policy position on coal extraction. Following this comprehensive policymaking process, the Scottish Government's finalised policy position is of no support for coal extraction in Scotland.

Coal exploitation is a matter reserved to the UK Government, and the Mining Remediation Authority is responsible for licensing coal mining activity in Scotland. Scotland's planning system is fully devolved to the Scottish Government. I have today written to UK Ministers to set out our finalised position on coal extraction.

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Where any planning applications come forward, these must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. As a statement of national policy, the finalised policy position on coal extraction would be a material consideration.

Following this comprehensive policymaking process, the Scottish Government's finalised policy position is of no support for coal extraction in Scotland.

Yours sincerely,

GILLIAN MARTIN

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