



22 February 2022
Ref: DSG(2022)C006

Maree Todd
MSP, Scottish Government

Please respond to:

DSG Secretariat
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Dear Maree

The **Dounreay Stakeholder Group** (DSG) is represented by over 20 organisations and therefore this response is one that is agreed by most organisations. However, there are some organisations or individuals, who may not agree entirely (or in the case of one individual not at all) with this submission and therefore they will be encouraged to make their own representation should they wish to do so.

We are writing to express our disappointment regarding your comments reported in the Caithness Courier on Wednesday 16 February 2022.

We understand the SNP policy stance on nuclear (in terms of old technology) and equally understand that as a Minister in the Government you will not brief against this policy. Our disappointment stems from the fact that you, as our constituency MSP, have not reached out to us as a community group, even though you have responded to previous correspondence from us and so are aware that we are an active group with a particular interest in the nuclear decommissioning industry.

Your position as set out in the Courier would have been more palatable if you had acknowledged the history and benefits that this site has brought to the region, and the wealth of skills in the area because of it and its supply chain. At the very least you could have recognised that some 'nuclear' jobs could continue in Caithness, beyond the Dounreay decommissioning, to support vital ongoing nuclear activities in the UK and around the world. Surely the Scottish Government, as well as the SNP party, could support this and would see the economic benefit of Caithness having a significant slice of that market, not least because a key part of decommissioning is restoring the environment and addressing the nuclear legacy. This must be in the Government and SNP's interests.

We are frustrated that Scottish Government's Energy Strategy 2017 is unclear and 5 years old and would welcome a clear review and consultation process to clarify the policy on other nuclear technologies. The current situation based on vague undefined wording and individual MSP opinions to the press on what they can support is unhelpful. We would ask you speak with your colleagues in Energy to allow a clear timeline of when the Energy Policy will be reviewed and more importantly consulted on. In addition, a clear energy policy would allow your constituents to understand what Scottish Government class as 'new' nuclear. A clear understanding of this and acknowledgement from the Government that nuclear energy is seen as 'green and sustainable' by a number of countries and as recently re-emphasised within the EU would be most helpful.

You acknowledge, in your article, the enthusiasm for nuclear power voiced by some areas of your constituency. It is therefore a pity that you made a public statement without taking time to seek the views of a significant number of your constituents. As our MSP surely you should be seeking to listen to the views of the communities to which you represent.

We also note you state there must be a focus on safe, sustainable, and cost-effective renewable sources for future energy supply. There is no mention of the sustainability of the communities in Caithness who rely on the £80m of wages and indirect costs that goes into the H&Is economy because of the Dounreay (and Vulcan) sites. It would be really helpful to understand what you, as our MSP, are doing to support and attract sustainable jobs with renewable energy companies to our area. Without these jobs the skills currently in the area that could be transferred into these sectors will migrate away. We assume given your clearly 'anti-nuclear' statements that you are working hard to replace these jobs with alternatives that are not nuclear related to maximise the other opportunities that exist in Caithness and Sutherland. While we do agree with Scottish Government's policies on renewable energy (and more widely the Just Transition Planning Framework) it would be useful to understand how this could translate into high-quality long-term employment in Caithness that can replace a lot of the jobs that will be lost as Dounreay is decommissioned.

Rather than asking you to respond to this letter which we fear would result in similar follow up letters to our queries around the airport PSO, we would like to invite you to a public meeting of the Dounreay Stakeholder Group. This will give you an opportunity to outline discussions and activities that you have undertaken to support the transition of our valuable nuclear jobs into alternative renewable energy jobs for the future..

Yours sincerely

Sent electronically without signature

David Alexander
DSG Socio Economic sub group Chair

cc. Jamie Stone, MSP
H&I MSPs
Richard Hardy, Just Transition Commissioner