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Letter: Welsh Government response to the NICW Renewable Energy Report

Letter from Jeremy Miles, Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Welsh Language, to the Chair of the National Infrastructure Commission for Wales.

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22 May 2024

Dear Chair of NICW

Thank you for sharing your **Preparing Wales for a Renewable Energy 2050 report** in October 2023, highlighting 11 recommendations where Wales can accelerate the deployment of renewable electricity across Wales. I have also noted the additional work referenced as part of the report.

Our support for emerging technologies and innovation sit at the heart of our Programme for Government, not only to deliver sustainable future sources of energy, but to retain wealth in Wales but also for our local communities. As I pick up this new portfolio, I am fully aware of the work that is required to ensure we meet these ambitious targets, and I will be using the work you and others have carried out when considering future work areas.

Energy policy in Wales is focused on enabling the decarbonisation of the energy system. This involves both encouraging low carbon generation and reducing emissions from high carbon sources. We are committed to moving away from our reliance on fossil fuels as soon as is practicably possible. Our renewable energy targets underpin this commitment to fully meet our electricity needs from renewable sources by 2035.

The Welsh Government has demonstrated how serious we are about the Climate Change emergency, and we will not shy away from tough decisions. We want to work with stakeholders to identify ways in which we can strongly encourage the renewable energy sector to invest in Wales, whilst at the same time setting high standards for those businesses we support. We see this as one of the most important ways we will bring about a just transition to a sustainable economy.

Collaborative working has underpinned the recently completed work on our renewable energy deep dive report and the relationships with these stakeholders

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has been strengthened which will enable us to continue working together to enable us to achieve our targets. For example, in relation to recommendation 2; regarding grid planning needing to consider the needs of Wales, Welsh Government has been advocating and delivering the evidence for a more planned approach to the future of energy system for some time and we welcome the proposal for a Regional Energy System Panner for Wales which will build on the Energy Networks Forum in Wales.

Our renewable industry is at the heart of what Wales needs to be a net zero and a just nation. And to do this we must innovate to break down the barriers that we currently face. Any developer working in Wales will know that our grid infrastructure urgently needs investment. We are actively working with the National Grid Electricity Systems Operator to ensure that their final network option for the Celtic Sea will provide a robust long-term solution for Wales and the southwest of England.

I am pleased to welcome a number of the recommendations from the Commission and see alignment to the work we already have underway following the renewable energy deep dive. Appendix A attached provides a more in-depth response to each of the recommendations.

I hope you can see the commitment and enthusiasm for driving this work forward from the Welsh Government. Like you stated in your report covering notes, it is true that there are many challenges facing the investment climate in both public and private sectors, but by encouraging the further growth of the offshore energy sector here in Wales, we can make a real and meaningful contribution to delivering a brighter and fairer future for our communities.

Yours sincerely,

Jeremy Miles AS/MS

Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Welsh Language

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