

Huw Irranca-Davies MS

Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for  
Climate Change and Rural Affairs

18 March 2025

Dear Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs,

You will be aware that Merthyr (South Wales) Ltd has submitted a planning application which, if agreed, will result in a significantly reduced level of restoration at the site of the former Ffos y Fran opencast coal mine. Given the urgency of the situation, the Committee has agreed to seek clarity on the Welsh Government's position and what options, if any, are available to it to intervene.

The Committee has taken a keen interest in this matter, having previously visited the site and conducted scrutiny on related issues through our inquiry into coal tip safety and restoration. Local residents and stakeholders have raised serious concerns with us about the revised restoration plans, particularly the potential long-term environmental and public safety risks arising from the large water-filled void and disused coal tips in close proximity to a residential area.

Concerns have also been raised with the Committee that Merthyr (South Wales) Ltd's application to vary the conditions of its original application is a result of a lack of funding to deliver a more comprehensive restoration scheme. However, the company's financial accounts suggest it may have put aside funding for restoration purposes. We would, therefore, welcome your views on whether a clearer understanding of the company's current financial position would be helpful and what mechanisms might be available to ensure the company meets its obligations.

We would be grateful if you could outline:

1. The options that are available to the Welsh Government to intervene in this case to ensure an appropriate level of restoration is delivered.
2. The steps the Welsh Government is taking to ensure the best possible outcome for local residents.

3. Whether the Welsh Government has assessed Merthyr (South Wales) Ltd's financial capacity to deliver the restoration that was initially agreed.

Due to the urgency of this matter, I look forward to receiving a response from you no later than **Tuesday 1 April 2025**.

Yours sincerely,



**Llyr Gruffydd MS,**  
Chair, Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg | We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.