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An Open Letter to the Parliamentary Labour Party

Back North Sea Oil and Gas. Not Imports.

Where things are made and who makes them matters. Recent geopolitical events have reminded us that energy security and industrial resilience are inseparable.

Countries that produce, build and manufacture retain greater control over their economic destiny. Those that become increasingly reliant on imports leave themselves exposed to decisions made elsewhere. That is why the future of our offshore energy sector matters far beyond energy alone.

Let's be clear. We support the government's ambition to build a secure, lower-carbon energy system. The growth of offshore wind, carbon capture and storage, hydrogen and other low-carbon technologies present economic and industrial opportunities for the UK and should be embraced.

However, the energy transition will be stronger and fairer if it is built on an all-energy approach; one that builds on our industrial strengths rather than overlooks them.

The truth is our country will continue to need oil and gas for decades to come. The question is not whether we use these resources, but whether we produce as much of them as possible ourselves or become increasingly dependent on imports from overseas. Imports will continue to play an important role in our evolving energy system, but they should be a complement to domestic production, not a substitute.

That question has been answered unambiguously by our North Sea partners in Norway, where the Labour Prime Minister and his government are backed by a cross-parliamentary consensus supporting the continued development, not the phase-out, of North Sea oil and gas alongside the build out of renewable energy.

Yet today, our policies leave us importing more than 40 per cent of our energy, including oil and gas and derivative fuel products from volatile regions, while refusing to prioritise our domestic production. That sends the wrong signal to workers, businesses and communities.

Producing our own energy supports jobs, sustains communities, strengthens supply chains and creates value that is redistributed across our nations and regions, and the comparatively lower emissions from domestic production versus shipped imports means it is also a more responsible choice for the climate.

But support for the North Sea is about more than oil and gas. It is a signal that the country remains committed to producing, building and manufacturing. It is a signal that government backs the people and places that have powered this country for generations.

A credible energy transition cannot be delivered by replacing one source of domestic energy with a growing dependence on imports. Instead, it must strengthen our capacity to produce the energy, fuels, chemicals and products on which our future depends – and North Sea oil and gas is the tip of the spear to realise this ambition.

Together, this is how we can bring to life the vision of reindustrialisation across our nations and regions. That is why - for our jobs and communities, economy and security, and for our climate obligations - we are asking you to back North Sea oil and gas. Not imports.

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