



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba  
**Claudia Beamish MSP**  
South Scotland

Paul Wheelhouse  
Minister for Business, Innovation and Energy  
St. Andrew's House  
Regent Road  
Edinburgh  
EH1 3DG

Our Ref: CB/CH

18<sup>th</sup> May 2018

Dear Paul,

### **Onshore Oil and Gas Licensing**

I am writing to you regarding the devolution of powers over onshore oil and gas licensing, commenced on 9th February 2018 under sections 47-49 of the Scotland Act 2016.

Thank you for your answers to the Topical Questions on 15<sup>th</sup> May. I would welcome further clarification from you regarding the **Scottish Government's** interpretation of the scope and any limitations of the licensing powers devolved under the Scotland Act 2016, and its present and any planned arrangements for use of these. Specifically:

- What framework does the Scottish Government currently have in place to take on the functions of the UK Oil & Gas authority in administering onshore oil and gas licensing, including: existing PEDL licenses; applications made for licenses in **Scotland under the UK's 14<sup>th</sup>** onshore oil and gas licensing round; and any future licenses the Scottish Government may intend to offer?
- If no such framework is currently in place, what steps is the Scottish Government taking to establish one, and what intermediary measures are in place, in particular regarding the administration of existing licenses?
- Can Ministers confirm that any such framework for reviewing and granting licenses would exclude applications for exploration, development and production of onshore oil and gas by unconventional methods including shale gas fracking and coalbed methane drilling?

**Claudia Beamish MSP** | Member of the Scottish Parliament for South Scotland

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- What powers are retained by the Secretary of State under section 49 of the Act in relation to existing licenses, and what is the practical effect of this in terms of the ongoing administration of PEDLs 133, 158, 162 and 163?
- Do Ministers consider that the Act grants them the power to revoke existing licences that were granted by the UK Government, and if so by what criteria would such action be judged?
- Does the Scottish Government intend to grant any applications for licenses in Scotland made under the UK Government's 14<sup>th</sup> onshore oil and gas licensing, which reportedly cover 1,900 km<sup>2</sup>?
- Has the Scottish Government received any application to extend the time period of the initial phase of PEDL 162 which covers 400km<sup>2</sup> in North Lanarkshire, and if not, does it anticipate that the license will expire on 30 June 2018 when the initial phase is due to run out?

Once again I welcome our continued dialogue on this issue, and shared ambition for the best outcome for communities in a frack-free Scotland.

I look forward to your response.

Kind regards,



**Claudia Beamish MSP**  
**MSP for South Scotland**