

The Rt Hon Ed Miliband MP
Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero
3-8 Whitehall Place
London
SW1A 2EG
Sent by email

9th February 2026

Re: Flawed recommendations in the Nuclear Regulatory Review

Dear Secretary of State,

We are writing with the support of the parliamentarians listed below to urge you not to take an environmental policy misstep.

As DESNZ considers next steps for progressing the recommendations made by the Nuclear Regulatory Review, we believe that three of the forty-seven recommendations are particularly flawed and would set back nature protection, climate and clean energy progress if implemented.

Review recommendations 11 and 12 propose amending the Habitats Regulations to reduce the requirement on developers to avoid harm to nature sites when they build nuclear plants. Recommendation 19 proposes removing a duty on local authorities to further the conservation and public access purposes of National Parks and National Landscapes, which the Review authors felt imposed undue burdens on nuclear developers.

Environmental groups have highlighted that these recommendations were primarily made based on just one nuclear case study in the review, that of the Hinkley C nuclear project. This case study included incorrect statistics which understated the environmental impact of the project and overstated the cost of environmental mitigation measures. It also omitted to set out the marginal role that environmental matters have played in the escalating costs and delays to the project, due largely to mistakes made by the developer. These result of these inaccuracies, and the extrapolation of the one flawed case study to wider development, has been the erroneous portrayal of nature protection as a significant blocker to nuclear energy requiring a sledgehammer solution in the form of recommendations 11, 12 and 19.

Acting on this flawed premise would have detrimental consequences for nature, climate and energy. This will especially be the case if the recommendations are applied beyond nuclear development to all infrastructure, as was suggested in December. Nature in England is in decline, and the Office for Environmental Protection has this month warned that the Government '*remains largely off track to meet its environmental targets and obligations, including legally binding biodiversity targets set under the Environment Act*'. Recommendations 11, 12 and 19 would allow more damage to be inflicted to protected sites and landscapes, putting Environment Act targets decisively out of reach. Such a collapse in nature recovery would impact net zero efforts, reducing the number of healthy natural habitats needed to sequester large amounts of carbon. All three recommendations would require legislation to put them into effect, resulting in a controversial new planning bill that will take up considerable

parliamentary time and Government capacity. This would be at the expense of other, better-founded reforms which will more effectively hasten the delivery of energy infrastructure.

Such a blow to nature protection, net zero and clean energy delivery is not yet Government policy. It can still be avoided, if you decide not to progress the three flawed recommendations in the Nuclear Regulatory Review. We urge you to follow the evidence, reject the three recommendations and prevent unnecessary and hugely damaging environmental regression.

Your sincerely,

Craig Bennett, Chief Executive, The Wildlife Trusts
Hilary McGrady, Director General, The National Trust
Beccy Speight, Chief Executive, RSPB
Darren Moorcroft, Chief Executive, The Woodland Trust
Roger Mortlock, Chief Executive, CPRE
Dr Rose O'Neill, Chief Executive, Campaign for National Parks
Kyle Lischak, Head of UK, ClientEarth
Richard Benwell, Chief Executive, Wildlife & Countryside Link

Letter also signed by:

Chris Hinchliff MP
Toby Perkins MP
Pippa Heylings MP
Clive Efford MP
Cat Eccles MP
Helen Maguire MP
Ian Sollom MP
Ellie Chowns MP
Bell Ribeiro-Addy MP
Neil Duncan-Jordan MP
Julia Buckley MP
Ian Byrne MP
Wera Hobhouse MP
Dr Peter Prinsley MP
John McDonnell MP
Kate Osborne MP
Terry Jermy MP
Cat Smith MP
Olivia Blake MP
Jenny Riddell Carpenter MP
Adrian Ramsay MP
Jon Trickett MP
Barry Gardiner MP
Mary Glindon MP

Rebecca Long-Bailey MP
Kim Johnson MP
Imran Hussain MP
Simon Opher MP
Zarah Sultana MP
Andrew George MP
Brian Leishman MP
Iqbal Mohamed MP
Carla Denyer MP
Siân Berry MP
Abtisam Mohamed MP
Tom Morrison MP
Nadia Whittome MP
Grahame Morris MP
Rachael Maskell MP
Alex Sobel MP
Jeremy Corbyn MP
Clive Lewis MP
John Milne MP
Manuela Perteghella MP
Alex Easton MP
John Whitby MP
Richard Burgon MP
Andy McDonald MP
Martin Rhodes MP
Ian Lavery MP
Mary Kelly Foy MP
Richard Quigley MP
Steve Witherden MP
Irene Campbell MP
Steve Darling MP
Vikki Slade MP
Richard Foord MP
Lord Randall of Uxbridge
Baroness Miller of Chilthorne Domer
Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb
Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle
Lord Thurlow
Lord Bradshaw
Professor Lord Krebs Kt FRS FMedSci ML
Baroness Manzoor MA CBE
Baroness Bakewell of Hardington Mandeville MBE
Baroness Lister of Burtersett
Lord Teverson
Lord Taylor of Goss Moor

CC:

Rt Hon Emma Reynolds MP, Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Chris Stark, Head of UK's Mission for Clean Power

Emily Shukburgh, Chief Scientific advisor at DESNZ

Anjali Goswami, Chief Scientific advisor at Defra

Ruth Davies, Foreign Secretary's Nature Envoy

Tony Juniper, Chair of Natural England

Alan Lovell, Chair of Environment Agency