



Margaret Greenwood MP
Member of Parliament for Wirral West



The Rt Hon Alok Sharma MP
COP26 President
Cabinet Office
70 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2AS

20 October 2021

Dear Alok,

I am writing to you in your capacity as COP26 President and ahead of the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference, which will be held in Glasgow and start later this month.

COP26 is a critical moment for our country and our planet. I believe that as the host the UK should be leading the way in the fight against climate change.

That is why I am very concerned that the government has still not ruled out Underground Coal Gasification (UCG) in the Dee Estuary.

A five year Conditional Licence for UCG in the estuary was granted by the Coal Authority under the Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition Government to a company called Cluff Natural Resources in January 2013.

I was proud to lead a campaign against UCG in the Dee Estuary which would have had an extremely detrimental impact on the environment and quality of life in Wirral West. Local residents put up posters to show their opposition to UCG, shared their concerns in the press and on social media and people attended rallies and signed a petition.

It was clear then that people in Wirral West did not want to see UCG in the Dee Estuary; that remains the case today.

The Dee Estuary is home to the much loved Hilbre Island, as well as being a place of international importance for migrating birds and an ideal location for spotting seals and other marine life. It is enjoyed by both local residents and visitors from across the region and further afield.

Thankfully, the licence is no longer in place. However, the government has only so far said it is 'not minded to support the development' of UCG. This is not at all the same as ruling it out entirely.

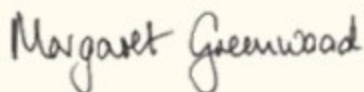
By the government's own admission following the Atkins report in 2016, emissions from UCG would be too high to be consistent with the government's commitment to a low-carbon future.

I am disappointed that the government has not taken a stronger stance on UCG and banned it altogether.

The COP26 website states: 'The UK is committed to working with all countries and joining forces with civil society, companies and people on the frontline of climate change to inspire climate action ahead of COP26.'

I would urge you, as COP26 President, to work with colleagues in the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and demonstrate the above commitment by banning UCG in the Dee Estuary and across the UK once and for all.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Margaret Greenwood". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Margaret Greenwood MP