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Neil Gray MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Wellbeing Economy, Fair Work and Energy
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh EH1 3DG

12 December 2023

Dear Mr Gray,

It has been drawn to my attention that you recently made a number of factually inaccurate assertions about nuclear power in the chamber of the Scottish Parliament – that “it is not safe, it is expensive and it is not wanted in Scotland. In addition, it is not needed in Scotland” – when asked why the Scottish Government would not follow the example of our closest allies, who signed a declaration at COP28 to triple nuclear capacity by 2050.

Many people across Scotland will have been alarmed to hear those falsehoods promoted by a Minister with responsibility for energy in the Scottish Government, particularly as you and your officials are aware that Torness Nuclear Power Station in East Lothian operates to the highest standards of safety in all circumstances, independently verified by the regulator. You insult the more than 700 people working there when you suggest that they operate anything less than a world-class station. I hope that you will have the good grace to seek an invitation to visit Torness in order to see for yourself the excellent work that the station staff do to provide clean, reliable, affordable, sovereign electricity to Scottish homes while putting tens of millions of pounds each year into the local economy, rather than casting further aspersions upon their exemplary professionalism.

As you and your officials should know, Torness is the best power generating asset in Scotland. It has the cleanest lifecycle generation, the highest reliability as measured by load factor, and the highest output of any station in the nation. It provides essential baseload power below market prices, especially in cold weather when demand is high and other generation is low. In fact, Scotland has had the cleanest power mix of the four nations of the United Kingdom because it has both nuclear and renewables. Scotland has consistently generated the most nuclear power of any part of the UK, thus avoiding more carbon dioxide emissions than any other power source in Scottish history.

As you and your officials should also be aware, three quarters of the global economy supports the role of new nuclear power as part of a secure, reliable electricity mix for the future. At COP28, 24 nations – including Canada, Sweden, Finland, France and the Netherlands – pledged to triple nuclear power capacity to help meet the challenges of climate change and energy security. The facts are that the countries with the cleanest power have nuclear and renewables working together, not set in false opposition to each other. Your reference to EU partners was in ignorance of the fact that Germany burns more coal than anybody else in Europe, lags others in emissions reductions and has seen a reappraisal in recent days by Angela Merkel's own party to their approach to nuclear. France and

Sweden, on the other hand, have the cleanest power in the EU – both with nuclear alongside other low carbon power sources.

Given the role you and your officials play in developing policy in Scotland, I am writing to repeat the invitation that your colleague, the Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, disappointingly declined – to meet with representatives of the civil nuclear industry in Scotland, so that you and your officials are better able to engage in an evidence-based assessment of the positive role of nuclear power in the net zero mix required for our future.

I, and those in the civil nuclear industry, look forward to your constructive engagement in response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom Greatrex', with a small dot at the end.

Tom Greatrex
Chief Executive
Nuclear Industry Association