



Carla Denyer MP
Member of Parliament for Bristol Central
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

Rt Hon Ed Miliband MP
Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero

18 May 2026

BY EMAIL

Dear Ed,

Re: Statutory rights for trade union “future-proofing reps” in the Energy Independence Bill

I am writing on behalf of the Green Party to ask you to grant statutory rights to union ‘future-proofing reps’ in the forthcoming Energy Independence Bill. This would create a legal requirement on employers to include trade union representatives in workplace planning related to decarbonisation, and is key to delivering a just transition.

As you know, the UK is entering the most significant period of industrial change in decades. Energy, manufacturing, construction, and transport will need to rapidly transform, driven by the need to address both the climate and cost-of-living crises and end our reliance on expensive and insecure fossil fuels. This has only become more pressing in light of economic fallout from the US-Israel illegal war on Iran.

These changes are already – and will continue to – have huge repercussions on the workforces currently employed in these industries. Already the number of jobs supported by the oil and gas industry in the UK has [halved](#) in the last decade due to declining North Sea reserves, and many are facing worsening conditions.

It is vital that workers have a defined role at the heart of this change.

Whilst we welcome many of the steps your government has taken in the past year in this regard, we are concerned that workforce planning is still too often an afterthought, and too many workers are finding out about major changes once decisions are already made.

Already workers up and down the country are taking this into their own hands. When the last coal power station closed in Ratcliffe-on-Soar in 2024, reps from Prospect, GMB and Unite [identified](#) new jobs for workers to move into, backed up by funding and support for employees to retrain for these new roles. In Falkirk, Unite shop stewards were [central to plans](#) for bus manufacturer Alexander Dennis to invest more in electric buses, protecting jobs and supporting greener transport. At Vauxhall’s Ellesmere Port facility, workers [successfully fought](#) to ensure that a switch to manufacturing electric vehicles did not result in poorer quality jobs.

Plus, we know that existing green reps are [driving forward change](#), whether that’s pushing employers to declare a climate emergency, making it easier to travel to work sustainably, or reducing energy and water usage in the workplace. These are positive examples, but are not

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universal – most workers do not yet have the support, resources or access that need to truly future-proof their workplace.

Statutory rights for future-proofing reps would mean workers have a seat at the table from the start.

Employers would be legally required to involve reps in workforce planning, skills, retraining, redeployment and job continuity linked to decarbonisation. It would ensure the workforce are consulted early on major investment and restructuring decisions linked to industrial change, and give them oversight to ensure public money supports decent jobs. And worker reps would be given protected time to carry out transition-related duties without loss of pay.

Futureproofing reps will be of particular importance in industries like oil and gas, where it is essential that jobs are protected as we phase-out fossil fuel production. They will also have a crucial role to play in workplaces that are changing significantly as a result of steps to decarbonise, such as steel plants or car factories.

We know that giving trade unions statutory roles delivers change. Workplaces with [union health and safety reps](#) have half the serious injury rates than those without, and the UK's injury rate has fallen dramatically since the introduction of statutory rights for these in 1977.

The Trades Union Congress has long called for statutory recognition for reps to support workplace transitions. These rights also have support from environmental groups including Greenpeace, Uplift, Friends of the Earth Scotland, Platform and Oil Change International.

This proposal also builds on my [Energy and Employment Rights Bill](#) introduced in the last parliamentary session. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss both my bill and this proposal with you further.

Yours sincerely,

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