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Offshore Petroleum Licencing Bill:

As constituents may know, this Bill would require the oil and gas regulator, the North Sea Transition Authority (NSTA), to run annual applications for new offshore oil and gas licences. However, I believe this is entirely unnecessary, since licensing rounds are already run when the NSTA decides they are needed. Hundreds of licences have been granted over six licensing rounds in the last 13 years, yet this has done nothing to protect us from the worst cost-of-living crisis in generations.

On energy bills, the Energy Secretary has herself stated that this policy will not cut prices for families. On energy security, meanwhile, doubling down on fossil fuels will make Britain more insecure, not less. The more we rely on fossil fuels, the more we depend on the dictators who control and set prices on international markets – no matter where those fossil fuels are produced.

The way for us to bring down energy imports is to produce more clean power at home that we can control. Indeed, the UK would need less imported gas by 2030 under the plans that I support to expand cheap, homegrown renewables and other low-carbon power, than under the Government's energy policies. I recognise that we owe it to North Sea oil and gas communities to deliver a managed, fair and prosperous transition. However, I believe the way to do this is to carry on using existing fields, while delivering jobs for North Sea workers in the industries of the future, such as in offshore wind, carbon capture and hydrogen.

Finally, the Bill is completely incompatible with our climate commitments. As the UN, International Energy Agency and various other respected bodies have made clear, maxing out fossil fuels risks global warming far above the 1.5°C limit we need to keep to if we are to avoid the worst impacts of climate change.

Unfortunately, the Bill passed its Second Reading. I can nevertheless assure constituents that I will continue to support efforts to oppose it through its further parliamentary stages.

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