

## **Charity says Michael Gove must listen to continued concern over new coalmine plans**

Last month, SLACC, together with the Council for the Protection of Rural England, Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace, handed in a petition [1] of 284,995 names, demonstrating continued and increasing concern over plans for a new coalmine for Cumbria.

Gove, who once described himself as “a shy green”, championed environmental issues as Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, further burnishing his green credentials.

SLACC says that the mine would undermine the UK’s ability to meet its climate targets and add to the climate emergency. As Carole Wood from SLACC explains: “The recent IPCC report highlights that human induced climate change is causing dangerous and widespread disruption in nature and affecting the lives of people around the world. Michael Gove’s time at DEFRA gave him an unprecedented insight into the challenges that climate change is already bringing to communities in Cumbria and around the country. There should be no new coal mines anywhere, and the UK government must show the way.”

The public inquiry was prompted by SLACC, which has been fighting plans by West Cumbria Mining to build the UK’s first deep coal mine in 30 years, in Whitehaven, which the company claims is needed for steel making. Yet SLACC says that there is now a mismatch in the timelines for coal use for steel, as the Cumbria coalmine is only likely to reach full production in 2029 just as its market will cease to exist. Carole explains: “Steel makers are clearly positioning themselves for a future without coal – the EU steel industry by 2030 and the UK industry by 2035. Rather than giving a green light to an investment that’s now too late, Michael Gove should be looking forward. He can best support the region by helping it invest in green jobs to further develop renewable energy capacity, and improve the energy efficiency of our housing stock today”.

For information on the six reasons why SLACC opposes the proposed Cumbria coal mine please visit <https://slacc.org.uk/cumbria-coal-mine/>

## **Notes**

[1] On 15<sup>th</sup> March three petitions were delivered to the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities . They were organised by: [CPRE](#) 10,000 target (9,263 to date); [Friends of the Earth](#) 75,000 target (62,675 to date) and [Greenpeace](#) 250,000 target (213,057 to date). The combined total is 335k (284,995k to date).

The public inquiry was called by Robert Jenrick (SoS MHCLG) after legal moves by SLACC. SLACC galvanised a network of local, national and international climate change experts and sustainability activists with a common interest in stopping global warming.

SLACC’s takes action to decrease community dependence on fossil fuels to lower carbon emissions. Their volunteers run projects on themes associated with food, energy and buildings, transport and creativity. The charity is based in Kendal, home to the country’s first Climate Change Citizens Jury.

IPCC 6<sup>th</sup> Assessment Report February 28<sup>th</sup> 2022

<https://www.unep.org/resources/report/ipcc-sixth-assessment-report-climate-change-2022>