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*Oddi wrth Ysgrifennydd Gwladol Cymru*

The Rt Hon Nicholas Edwards MP

*From The Secretary of State for Wales*

*R 19/12*

19 December 1980

*Dear David*

I am increasingly concerned at the delay in announcing our detailed plans for the Coal Liquefaction project at Point of Air, and I have an uneasy sense that you may be having second thoughts about it.

While I understand that the immediate needs of this country may not dictate progress on the scale attempted elsewhere, it would in my judgement be a mistake to stand aside from research and development in this increasingly important field, particularly when we have made such good use of the very modest resources devoted to this work so far. The total expenditure proposed on this aspect of energy research is insignificant in relation to what is being done in nuclear energy research programmes, yet the long term potential is of very great importance.

You will appreciate the significance of the pilot project for an area suffering severely from steel closures and there will be bitter disappointment in North East Wales if the project were to be abandoned. There are strategic and regional policy issues here that need to be considered alongside those concerning energy research and I hope that colleagues will be able to discuss this collectively before decisions are taken.

I am copying this to Members of E, to George Younger and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

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*Ned*

The Rt Hon David Howell MP  
Secretary of State for Energy  
Department of Energy  
Thames House South  
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LONDON

19 DEC 1980

