



Public Accounts Committee

The Rt Hon Graham Stuart MP
Minister of State
Department for Energy Security and Net Zero
1 Victoria Street
London SW1H 0ET
By email: Parliamentary.Unit@BEIS.gov.uk &
NAO.PACliaison@beis.gov.uk

21 March 2023,

DESNZ CONTINGENT LIABILITY: SELLAFIELD REPLACEMENT SEA LINE (RSL) LEASE

Dear Minister of State,

Thank you for your letter of 8 February 2023 notifying me of a contingent liability arising from the introduction of the Sellafield Replacement Sea Line (RSL) lease.

On the basis of the information contained in your letter, I can confirm that I have no issues to raise on the contingent liability arising. However, I note that the timing of your statement did not allow for the standard 14-day parliamentary sitting period to be observed.

The delays between approval by HM Treasury, the lease effective date and notification to this Committee are not acceptable and deprive Parliament of the opportunity for timely scrutiny. This is a matter I wrote to your predecessor Department on several occasions. In future, every effort should be made to comply with the provisions of Managing Public Money and in particular provisions relating to timely notification to parliamentary committees.

I would like to understand why the delay in commercial negotiations meant that the NDA was unable to notify the Department that the lease had been entered into. Could you please set out the circumstances in more detail for me so that we can understand and seek to avoid similar situations arising again.

I would also like you to confirm that, with the creation of DESNZ, you will take the opportunity to remind the bodies within the departmental boundary to promptly inform the Department of matters of this nature.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee, Darren Jones and the Treasury Officer of Accounts.

Yours sincerely

Dame Meg Hillier MP
Chair of the Committee of Public Accounts