

## **Model Motion – West Cumbria Coal Mine**

Please do tell us if your branch has passed this motion by emailing: [northwestfoe@foe.co.uk](mailto:northwestfoe@foe.co.uk)

This Branch/AGM/Trades Council/Conference is dismayed to learn that a new coal mine in West Cumbria has been approved by the government in December 2022. West Cumbria Mining Ltd wants to build a new coal mine in Whitehaven. It would be the UK's first new deep coal mine for 30 years and produce millions of tonnes of coal at a time when scientists have just delivered the starkest warning yet about the climate crisis. It comes shortly after Cop26 in Glasgow where a number of countries and banks made important commitments to phase out coal production.

West Cumbria Mining claims that the mine will be carbon-neutral but this ignores emissions from burning the coal it would produce and relies on the use of offsetting some of the mine's operational emissions. Annual emissions from the mine and the coal it produces would be equivalent to approximately 2% of total UK annual greenhouse gas emissions. The company claims the mine will create 500 jobs, but this relies on there being a medium- and long-term market for its coal. However this is in doubt as the European steel industry is moving away from coal use to greener production methods. West Cumbria Mining is indulging in greenwashing and is exploiting the local community's understandable desire for jobs.

According to WCM the mine will be operating for 27 years and will produce 64 million tonnes of coal. When used, this will emit 200 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e, double the annual emissions of the UK's entire energy sector. From October 2024, coal will be phased out of electricity generation completely, however the phase-out only applies to unabated coal power generation, allowing for continued mining and use of coal for heating and more significantly, industrial uses such as producing coke for steel making, which is 40% more carbon-intensive than coal for generating electricity.

Trade unions are currently denouncing the Cost-of-Living crisis. Energy prices have seen one of the biggest rises in the past few decades disproportionately deeply on poorest & most vulnerable communities who are having to choose between heating and eating. Rather than support more fossil fuel extraction, investments should be going to renewable energy generation via a publicly owned system of production. A house-to-house insulation programme, replacement of heating systems and electricity supplies by renewable energy should be carried out urgently, creating much-needed jobs and tackling the fuel poverty crisis.

This Branch/AGM/Trades Council/Conference believes that:

- The creation of the new West Cumbria coal mine must be opposed and welcome the campaign by Friends of the Earth and others.
- No new fossil fuel projects should take place in the UK and the energy sector should be brought back into public ownership to allow a Just Transition to renewable energy and sustainable solutions.
- This position does not undermine the historic support the Trade union movement gave to the miners and their communities during the miners strike 35 years ago.
- The government and local authorities should instead focus on creating Climate Jobs in renewable energy and housing retrofitting.
- The Trade union movement to be wary of greenwashing and false solutions. Carbon Capture & Storage as a mass technology for example is unlikely to be available in time to tackle the Climate Emergency, we must act now.

This Branch/AGM/Trades Council/Conference therefore agrees to:

- Disseminate information to members & affiliates about the campaign and aim to escalate this motion via their unions structures, if the mine is approved.
- Support a campaign for Climate Jobs in Cumbria and Lancashire that could lead to the creation of thousands of new jobs in housing insulation.
- Will send delegate(s) to events and workshops related to the campaign
- Consider a donation to the legal challenge mounted against the mine approval

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## More information and resources:

[Watch our Trade union briefing by clicking here.](#)

[Friends of the Earth briefing – Tip of the iceberg: The future of fossil fuel extraction \(Oct 2021\)](#)

[Friends of the Earth petition](#) opposing the West Cumbria coal mine please sign by 13<sup>th</sup> March

Friends of the Earth [press release at end of public enquiry](#) (Oct 2021) Cumbria Green Jobs Summit – [watch the video recording](#) and check out presentations & break out discussions [here](#)

[Film miniseries on Friends of the Earth Cumbria Facebook page](#) containing interviews with Cumbria's green jobs workers.

[Greenpeace petition](#) to stop the mine

[South Lakes Action on Climate Change](#) website

Trade Unions for Energy Democracy, [“The hard facts about Coal: Why Trade unions should re-evaluate their support for Carbon Capture and Storage”](#) (2015)

[Dig coal to save the climate: the folly of Cumbria's plans for a new coalmine](#) - Article by Rebecca Willis, May 2021, Guardian

[End of Coal in Sight - COP26](#) official website

[Climate Jobs: Building a workforce for the Climate Emergency](#) report – Campaign Against Climate Change Trade Union group

[Greener Jobs Alliance](#) website

[Coal Action Network](#) website

Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy [Conversion factors 2021](#)

Link to a [FAQ document created by Friends of the Earth](#) (January 2022)

Cumbria Green Jobs Summit – watch the [video recording here](#) and check out [presentations & break out discussions here](#).

Report [“The Potential for Green Jobs in Cumbria”](#)

[Climate Jobs - latest report](#) by the Campaign Against Climate Change Trade Union group