

PETER GIBSON MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

May 2023

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for your email about deep-sea mining.

The UK has agreed not to support the issuing of any exploitation licences for deep-sea mining projects unless or until there is sufficient evidence about the potential impact on deep-sea ecosystems.

The UK's approach is both precautionary and conditional. As a responsible international actor and Party to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the UK is fully engaged in the negotiations underway at the International Seabed Authority (ISA) and will work closely with partners who are committed to ensuring the highest environmental standards are embedded in the Regulatory framework of the ISA.

To inform policymaking, the Government commissioned an independent evidence review into the potential risks and benefits of deep-sea mining. This was conducted by the British Geological Survey, the National Oceanography Centre and Heriot-Watt University and was published in October 2022.

Through the UK's sponsorship of academic research and existing exploration licences, over 70 peer-reviewed publications supporting a greater understanding of environmental issues associated with deep-sea mining have already been produced, with more to come. The Government is also part-funding the SMARTEx project on seabed mining and resilience to experimental impact, which aims to build a better understanding of the ecosystem in the Pacific abyss.

The Government has made clear it would engage in public consultation ahead of making a decision to issue any UK-sponsored deep sea mining exploitation licence.

Once again, thank you for taking the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again. If you would like to keep up to date with my activities as your Member of Parliament then please subscribe to my Darlington Matters newsletter using this link: www.petergibson.org/signup

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Peter Gibson".

PETER GIBSON MP

Member of Parliament for Darlington

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