



Lukas Santos
Deputy Clerk
Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee
Welsh Parliament

Email: seneddclimate@senedd.wales

16 January 2025

Dear Lukas,

Thank you for your invitation to the Evidence session about the Disused Mine and Quarry Tips (Wales) Bill scheduled for 30 January 2025. I can confirm that Carl Banton, Operations Director, will attend, give evidence and engage with the committee. It may be helpful if I outline the Mining Remediation Authority's involvement with coal tip safety in Wales ahead of the meeting.

Local authorities are currently the primary authority for the regulation of disused tips and quarries, as set out by the Mines and Quarries (Tips) Act 1969. The Act does not include requirements for regular, formal inspections of tips. In the past, there have been a range of approaches by local authorities to tip management, due to varying levels of experience and resources.

In February 2020 extreme rainfall caused landslips at disused coal tips in Tylorstown and Wattstown in Rhondda Cynon Taf. The Welsh and UK Governments set up the Coal Tip Safety Task Force, to assess the immediate status of disused coal tips in Wales. Our long history of coal tip management meant we were asked by Welsh Government to be a key partner in the Task Force. Our initial work involved emergency inspections at priority tips and developing a database categorising all disused coal tips in Wales. This has helped to identify tips which present a higher potential for impacting public safety.

From this work it became clear that a coordinated programme of risk-based inspections was required. We have supported Welsh Government by undertaking these inspections and have provided a chronology which you can see at Appendix A. This work has provided a baseline to support the development of a Wales wide tip inspection programme.

Making a better future for people
and the environment in mining areas

In addition to our work for the Welsh Government Coal Tip Safety programme, we are also contracted to Natural Resources Wales to provide tip management advice and undertake inspections.

Whilst managing the associated public safety of tips is a matter for the landowner and local authority, we have and will continue to provide advice to local authorities, Welsh Government and other partners as needed. It was clear from discussions with stakeholders that there was a wide range of approaches to tip management, and that a coordinated programme of risk-based inspections was required to provide a baseline from which development of a Wales wide tip inspection programme could be established.

With assistance from the Mining Remediation Authority, Welsh Government engaged the services of the Law Commission to undertake a review of the existing Mines and Quarries (Tips) Act 1969, the result of which was a recommendation to develop new legislation to address the issue of tip safety in Wales.

We welcome the Introduction of the Disused Mine and Quarry Tips (Wales) Bill and look forward to working closely with Welsh Government on its implementation as an active partner.

I hope this is helpful. Please do let me know if we can assist further. We look forward to attending the inquiry on 30 January 2025.

Yours sincerely,



Lisa Pinney MBE
Chief Executive

Making a better future for people
and the environment in mining areas

Appendix A – Examples of recent support provided by the Mining Remediation Authority

- **2020 – 2021** Coal Tip Safety Task Force set up, inspections of high-risk tips commenced (184 inspections), development of GIS database and categorisation commenced.
- Our Tips Response Team liaised with all Welsh local authorities to collate information on disused tips, including current awareness and management. This work was funded by Welsh Government and delivered under a Memorandum of Understanding.
- **2021 – 2022** Work with Welsh Government and external suppliers on technology trials to give early warnings of movement on tips. First round of Category C and D inspections completed (329 inspections).
- Engaging with Natural Resources Wales, Local Resilience Forums and the Welsh Local Government Association to raise awareness of tip management and emergency response.
- Supported Welsh Government to request that the Law Commission review the Mines and Quarries (Tips) Act 1969. As a result, they recommended that new legislation be developed to address the issue of tip safety in Wales.
- **2022 – 2023** Second round of Category C and D inspections completed (427 inspections).
- We were also instructed by Welsh Government to develop a design for remedial works at Wattstown and to procure and supervise the works. We successfully provided these works in 2022.
- **2023 – 2024** Publicly owned Category B inspections completed (233 inspections). Third round of Category C and D inspections completed (433 inspections).
- **2024 – 2025** Privately owned Category B inspections completed (433 inspections). Fourth round of Category C and D inspections underway (100 inspections to date).

Tip categories

Disused coal tips are being given interim categories. The categories reflect which tips may need more frequent inspections to assess drainage and stability. Categorisation considers many different factors which are assessed by technical experts. Factors considered include:

- Size and geometry
- Potential hazards
- Potential receptors
- Site history
- Any associated infrastructure
- Inspection and monitoring requirements

Category D

Making a better future for people and the environment in mining areas

A tip with the potential to impact public safety, to be inspected at least twice a year.

Category C

A tip with the potential to impact public safety, to be inspected at least once a year.

Category B

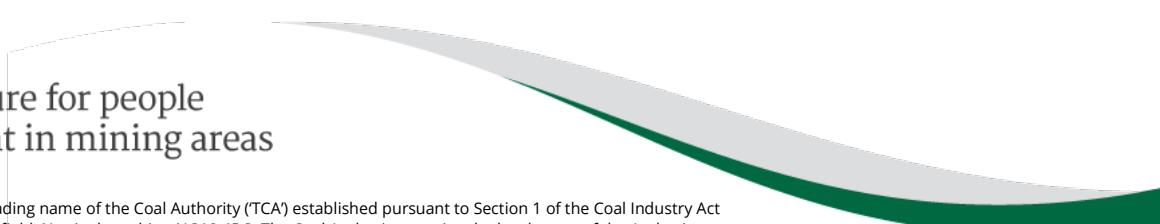
A tip with the unlikely potential to impact public safety.

Category A

A tip with the very unlikely potential to impact public safety.

Category R

A tip with the very unlikely potential to impact public safety. Potentially removed or levelled and often built over.



Making a better future for people
and the environment in mining areas