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HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

24 January 2025

The Rt Hon Darren Jones MP
Chief Secretary to the Treasury
HM Treasury
1 Horse Guards Road
London
SW1A 2HQ

Dear Chief Secretary to the Treasury,

We write as an organised grouping of Labour MPs representing former coalfield constituencies across England, Scotland, and Wales, to ask you to address the ongoing unfairness relating to the British Coal Staff Superannuation Scheme (BCSSS).

We are extremely grateful that the Labour government delivered long overdue justice for former miners and their widows, in the first Labour budget, by authorising the transfer of the £1.5 billion Mineworkers Pension Scheme Investment Reserve Fund. This historic decision significantly benefitted our constituents, with many receiving a 32% increase in their pensions. The positive impact is felt deeply across our communities and local economies.

However, the matter of securing pension justice for the mining communities remains incomplete. When addressing the legacy of the coal industry, it is essential to include everyone who contributed to its success, those who worked underground, served in canteens and offices, or took on roles as deputies and managers. Parity must be achieved between the MPS and BCSSS to ensure fair treatment for all former British coal workers.

To this end, we call on the government to forgo the final £2.3 billion payment from the BCSSS reserve, due in 2033. Transferring this reserve would deliver fairer pensions to BCSSS members, who include many individuals moved from the MPS to the BCSSS with minimal change to their roles. Nearly three-quarters of BCSSS members carried out work underground comparable to that of MPS members, with pensions that fall within a similar range.

Furthermore, we must address the specific injustices faced by women in the coal industry. These women, the majority of whom are BCSSS members, were often paid significantly less than their male colleagues and remain excluded from pension justice in retirement. Correcting this historic inequality is a matter of principle and fairness.

Time is of the essence. With approximately 2,000 BCSSS beneficiaries passing away each year and that number increasing rapidly due to the age of the beneficiaries. Urgent action is required to ensure justice is delivered to those who powered this nation. We are confident this issue can be resolved swiftly if the government commits to achieving parity between the two schemes.

We understand that the BCSSS trustees have already contacted you regarding this matter and that the Minister for Industry has written to you about the scheme. We urge you to prioritise this issue and address it without delay, ensuring no miner, widow, or coalfield family feels excluded from the justice they deserve.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Morris', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Grahame Morris MP

Co-signed by:

Adam Jogee MP

Allison Gardner MP

Amanda Hack MP

Andrew Ranger MP

Brian Leishman MP

Cat Eccles MP

Charlotte Nichols MP

David Baines MP

David Williams MP

Elaine Stewart MP

Emma Lewell-Buck MP

Euan Stainbank MP

Frank McNally MP

Gareth Snell MP

Graeme Downie MP

Ian Lavery MP

Jade Botterill MP

Jake Richards MP

James Naish MP

Jo Platt MP

Jo White MP

Jon Trickett MP

Josh Newbury MP

Kate Osborne MP

Lee Pitcher MP

Lillian Jones MP

Luke Akehurst MP

Marie Tidball MP

Mary Kelly Foy MP

Matt Bishop MP

Melanie Ward MP

Michael Wheeler MP

Michelle Welsh MP

Natalie Fleet MP

Paul Davies MP

Rachel Taylor MP

Richard Baker MP

Sally Jameson MP

Sarah Champion MP

Sharon Hodgson MP

Steve Yemm MP