

**22 May 2014**

Dear Mr. Scott

***For the attention of the Secretary of State  
Halite Energy Group's Underground Gas Storage facility at Preesall***

I am writing as a Director of the Civil Engineering Contractors Association (CECA NW), that comprises both local SMEs and multinational contractors, in support of Halite Energy Group's Underground gas storage facility at Preesall. CECA and its members are directly engaged in all infrastructure projects in the North West and are keen to assist developers where possible.

I have recently met with my members and the management team of Halite. Keith Budinger, the Halite CEO updated me on the status of the re-determination and gave me a very detailed overview of the project.

It goes without saying a £660m investment in the North West is very significant. Alongside the obvious benefits to the local supply chain for goods and services, we consider there is a compelling case and therefore offer our support for the Preesall project.

Having analysed the judgment handed down by Mrs. Justice Patterson in January 2014, I was very surprised to read that the DECC Minister responsible for planning consents, rejected the original application against the advice of the independent Planning Inspectorate.

I sincerely hope the apparent long-standing vocal opposition by local MPs Ben Wallace and Eric Ollerenshaw (which does not fully reflect the views within the community) did not exert a disproportionate effect on DECC. Given the strategic importance of Preesall to the UK and the very authoritative evidence I have seen from Halite on geology to address the previous concerns of DECC, I believe Halite deserves a fair hearing this time.

The UK has suffered in the past from high levels of consent risk and your new process for major infrastructure has done much to restore confidence among project developers and investors. It is important to maintain this and granting Preesall consent would be very helpful in that regard.

The North West would welcome this investment. Please give this project fair consideration and award consent.

Yours sincerely

Guy Lawson  
Director  
CECA North West