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EU Offshore Oil & Gas Safety proposals

Press Release from SNP MEP Alyn Smith

SNP MEP and sole Scots MEP on the European Parliament's Energy Committee **Alyn Smith** has questioned the need for the proposed Offshore Oil and Gas Safety Regulation, and been assured by European Commission representatives that they want to see "improvements, but no disruption to existing best practice" in the North Sea.

Alyn questioned the necessity of the proposed new EU-wide regulation which could be to the detriment of existing offshore safety legislation. Alyn reiterated the unanimous views of industry and union representatives that the package as drafted is in fact a retrograde step, though acknowledged that seen on an EU wide basis there could be merit in an EU approach for some states.

Speaking after the meeting, Alyn said:

"What was evident from today's meeting is that we all share the same concerns, and we are all committed to ensuring the highest health and safety and environmental standards possible. However, we must be wary that what we do actually helps, rather than hinders. The package as drafted is a step backwards.

"I was glad of the tone in today's meeting and the balanced assessment from our draftsman, he is a sensible guy and I am confident he will do this justice. However the question had to be asked- is this package actually necessary? Will the implementation of an EU-wide regulation improve safety on Europe's offshore oil and gas platforms?

"In Scotland, we take the issue very seriously. Piper Alpha remains a national trauma, and we do not need reminding that there is no room for complacency.

"The package as it stands is well intentioned, but is simply not fit for purpose. A recent joint industry and trade union paper argued the regulation would be a step backwards, and an analysis by Fitch Ratings concluded that the proposed regulation could cost the sector billions of pounds with no benefit.

"Passing legislation is easy, ensuring we have the right package and methods of implementation, is not. We must find a solution with the right amount of flexibility."

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