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The Rt Hon Sir Keir Starmer KCB KC MP
Prime Minister

By email: pm.post.ext@no10.gov.uk

Dear Prime Minister

We are writing as the elected Mayors of Tees Valley and Hull and East Yorkshire to raise the alarm about the future of two major employers and strategic assets in our regions – the Ensus plant in Redcar and the Vivergo plant in Hull.

These facilities produce bioethanol and support hundreds of well-paid, skilled industrial jobs – and thousands more in the wider supply chain, including farmers, hauliers, engineers and contractors. E10 petrol gets its name because it contains up to 10% ethanol – and its workers in our region who produce that ethanol. Every time someone fills up, it's their effort powering Britain's road transport.

The decision to remove tariffs on US bioethanol as part of the recent trade deal may have been made in Westminster, but its consequences will be felt directly in communities like ours – parts of the country that have already borne the brunt of deindustrialisation and seen little benefit from globalisation.

Removing tariffs will open the door to subsidised US imports. Combined with a regulatory environment that already disadvantages domestic producers, both companies have warned that their operations are no longer commercially viable. Without urgent intervention, closures are imminent.

This would be a hammer blow to our communities – and a clear signal that jobs in the North still come second in national policymaking.

The wheat used by these plants isn't suitable for milling into bread or pasta, so they provide a vital domestic market for UK arable farmers. The process also generates protein-rich animal feed. These are the kind of high-value, joined-up supply chains the UK should be protecting – not abandoning.

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Bioethanol production also creates industrial-grade CO₂, which is critical for everything from cooling nuclear reactors to preserving food and supporting surgical operations. Without a secure domestic supply, the UK is dangerously exposed to fragile imports, as the 2021 shortages made all too clear.

This is not a sunset sector. Bioethanol is a platform for the future – with enormous potential to support emerging industries like Sustainable Aviation Fuel, low-carbon shipping and the wider bioeconomy. Letting this capacity collapse would be a short-sighted mistake that would send the wrong signal to investors about the Government's commitment to British industry outside of London.

We urge you to act now, as you and your Government already have in other sectors facing unfair foreign competition, to protect these jobs, support our communities, and secure the North's industrial future.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you urgently to set out the case in full.

Yours sincerely



Ben Houchen
Tees Valley Mayor



Mayor Luke Campbell, MBE
Mayor of Hull and East Yorkshire Combined Authority