# Wales proposes Disused Mine and Quarry Tips Bill to enhance public safety



Huw Irranca-Davies, Wales’ deputy first minister, has led a significant debate in the Senedd regarding a new Disused Mine and Quarry Tips Bill aimed at addressing the long-standing legacy of mining across Wales. The legislation, if it successfully navigates the remaining stages of parliamentary scrutiny, will result in the establishment of a new public body, the Disused Tips Authority for Wales. This authority will be tasked with ensuring that disused mine and quarry tips do not pose a threat to human welfare.

Mr Irranca-Davies explained that the bill seeks to implement "a consistent and a robust system of assessment, registration, management and monitoring of disused tips." The bill also proposes to update outdated legislation dating back to the late 1960s, granting powers of entry to inspect sites and lowering the threshold for intervention to act more swiftly where risks are identified.

The impetus for the bill stems from a landslide incident in Tylorstown in 2020, a stark reminder of the dangers posed by Wales’ mining legacy. During the stage-one debate held on 29 April, the deputy first minister outlined several proposed amendments to strengthen the legislation. These include mandating a minimum frequency for tip inspections, creating a more comprehensive and accessible register of all disused tips, and ensuring the public is kept informed about any changes to tip categorisation.

Despite broad cross-party agreement on the general principles underpinning the bill, opposition members highlighted several concerns. Llŷr Gruffydd, chair of the Senedd’s climate committee and a Plaid Cymru politician, pointed to the recent December 2023 landslide in Cwmtillery as a "stark reminder" of ongoing risks. He noted that a recurring theme in the committee’s report was a lack of detailed information regarding the operational aspects of the new regulatory system, which is set to come into effect in April 2027.

Delyth Jewell, Plaid Cymru’s shadow climate secretary, raised worries that the legislation could unintentionally encourage companies to use the remediation of coal tips as a pretext for extraction activities. She expressed particular concern about proposals in her South Wales East region to fund Bedwas tip remediation through coal extraction, stating, "This bill must be amended to prevent it," speaking to the South Wales Argus.

Following the stage-one debate, the bill now proceeds to stage two, which involves a detailed consideration of amendments by the Senedd’s climate committee. The creation of the Disused Tips Authority and the updates to legal powers underscore the Welsh Government’s commitment to managing the legacy of mining safely, with emphasis on improved regulatory oversight and public safety.

The South Wales Argus is reporting that the bill represents a key step forward in tackling the environmental and safety challenges posed by historical mining activities in Wales, even as debate continues over how to address certain gaps and potential unintended consequences within the proposed framework.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

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2. <https://www.coalaction.org.uk/2024/12/23/disused-mine-and-quarry-tips-wales-bill/> - An analysis by the Coal Action Network discussing the Disused Mine and Quarry Tips (Wales) Bill, its legislative aims, and recommendations for its implementation.
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