

# Scottish Parliament Debate on Delivering a Just Transition to Net Zero and Climate Resilience

Friends of the Earth Scotland briefing  
6th December 2021



## Summary

To keep the global temperature rise below 1.5°C, a rapid phase out of fossil fuels, towards renewables must happen this decade. Friends of the Earth Scotland believe the urgent need to transform our economy in this way is an opportunity to build a fairer and more equal Scotland.

A Just Transition requires this shift to happen at the pace necessary to avoid climate catastrophe, while protecting workers' livelihoods, creating new jobs, and delivering a fairer Scotland. By ensuring impacted workers and communities, their trade unions and environmentalists are at the table shaping policies, tackling the climate crisis can provide benefits across the country.

Right now Scotland is failing to deliver a Just Transition. Climate targets have been missed for three consecutive years, the full extent of economic potential in green industries have been squandered and we are yet to see commitments to the policies and finance required to turn this tide.

### We urge the Scottish Government to:

- 1. Get on track to meet emissions reductions targets by developing a robust and credible plan, to meet them that doesn't rely on unreliable and unproven negative emissions technologies.** This requires reviewing the Climate Change Plan Update and providing clear analysis of the expected impact of policies on jobs and the economy, and how new opportunities will be captured.
- 2. Commit to a rapid and fair phase out of North Sea oil and gas production over the next decade, in line with 1.5°C,** ending all financial support and subsidies for fossil fuels and redirect towards the just transition.
- 3. Just Transition Plans for key sectors must set targets for decarbonisation, investment and job creation alongside policies to demonstrate how they will be reached.** Workers and communities must be involved in shaping these plans to provide assurances and ensure they reflect the priorities of those whose livelihoods may be affected.
- 4. Support workers in the oil and gas industry to transition into renewables,** including by providing a guarantee for alternative employment and to explore the creation of an Offshore Training Passport, aligning training standards across the energy sector.
- 5. Urgently take forward the recommendations of the previous Just Transition Commission,** including recommendations within their Interim Report and Advice for a Green Recovery. The membership of the new Commission must reflect the key stakeholders in a Just Transition of impacted workers and communities and environmentalists.

## A credible plan for 1.5

COP26 has reaffirmed the urgent need to get on track to meet the global goal of limiting warming to no more than the critical 1.5°C threshold. It has also demonstrated the considerable gap between rhetoric and action with current pledges putting the world on track for a

catastrophic 2.7°C. The Scottish Government has missed the last three years of climate targets and has today been criticised by the UK Climate Change Committee for a lack of detail and transparency in plans to meet the 2030 target, echoing the critique of four Holyrood Committees earlier this year.

A robust and adequately financed climate plan with clear time frames for action, that provides clear analysis of impacts of policies on jobs and the economy, and how new opportunities will be captured is vital to delivering the Just Transition. **Ministers must commit to reviewing the deficient Climate Change Plan Update to show a credible pathway to getting on track to meet targets and delivering a just transition.**

Central to this plan must be a rapid and just transition away from fossil fuels and into renewable energy.<sup>1</sup> The Scottish Government's recent opposition to the Cambo field is aligned with the conclusion of the International Energy Agency that any new oil and gas fields anywhere in the world would be inconsistent with limiting warming to 1.5°C,<sup>2</sup> but Ministers must go further and **commit to a rapid and fair phase out of North Sea oil and gas production over the next decade, in line with 1.5°C**, and ending all financial support and subsidies for fossil fuels and redirecting these towards the just transition.

### **A Just Transition away from fossil fuels**

Workers and communities currently dependent on fossil fuels must be confident that new opportunities will replace polluting industries, and that they will be supported throughout the transition. The **Just Transition Plans for key sectors must provide this certainty by setting targets for decarbonisation, investment and job creation alongside policies to demonstrate how they will be reached.** Workers and communities must be involved in shaping these plans to provide assurances and ensure they reflect the priorities of those whose livelihoods may be affected.

Offshore workers possess vital skills that are directly transferable to renewable energy industries. At present, however, despite 81% being open to moving out of oil and gas, workers are not seeing opportunities to move into renewables, rather they face considerable barriers and costs in doing so.<sup>3</sup> **It is critical for barriers and costs for workers associated with the transition to be dealt with urgently. An Offshore Training Passport, for example, supported by 94% of offshore workers<sup>4</sup>, would address training barriers by aligning standards and skills recognition where possible across roles and sectors.** The Passport would reduce costs often borne by workers significantly by avoiding duplication and open up opportunities in renewable energy to all offshore workers by providing the guarantee that their certification and experience, often built over decades, will be recognised.

Turning the tide on the failure to deliver the full potential of green jobs in Scotland so far<sup>5</sup> will also require greater intervention in the economy through stricter conditionality on government support to the private sector and the establishment of new public energy and infrastructure companies to lead transformative progress while prioritising domestic supply chains and tackling fuel poverty.

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<sup>1</sup><https://foe.scot/press-release/watershed-report-oil-reserves-increase/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.iea.org/reports/net-zero-by-2050>

<sup>3</sup><https://foe.scot/resource/offshore-oil-and-gas-workers-views/>

<sup>4</sup><https://foe.scot/resource/tickets-training-the-hidden-costs-for-offshore-oil-gas-workers/>

<sup>5</sup> [https://stuc.org.uk/files/Policy/Research-papers/Renewable\\_Jobs\\_Crisis\\_Covid-19.pdf](https://stuc.org.uk/files/Policy/Research-papers/Renewable_Jobs_Crisis_Covid-19.pdf)

## **Just Transition Commission & its recommendations**

Across two years, the Just Transition Commission provided recommendations in their Interim Report, their Advice on a Green Recovery and in their Final Report. The Scottish Government has so far only committed to implementing the headline recommendations of their Final Report.

**It is crucial that the Scottish Government urgently implement more fully the Just Transition Commission's recommendations including a fossil fuel decommissioning programme, public investment in renewable manufacturing facilities, and using devolved power to maximise content from local supply chains in renewable energy projects.**

The Scottish Government has pledged to continue the Commission, with a new membership, and a different role, with a greater emphasis on scrutinising policies and monitoring progress. The majority of the membership of the new Commission must represent the key stakeholders in a Just Transition - affected workers and communities, trade unions and environmentalists. It must be empowered to perform its functions independent of government, with an adequate budget and staffing capacity to reflect the importance of this role. Furthermore, the Commission should be established by statute to ensure vital oversight of plans to cut emissions to 2045.

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