



Friends of the Earth Scotland

Humza Yousaf MSP
First Minister
Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

Our Reference: PH281123

28/11/23

Via e-mail, CC: *Neil Gray MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Wellbeing Economy, Fair Work and Energy, Màiri McAllan MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Net Zero and Just Transition, Gillian Martin MSP, Minister for Energy and the Environment.*

Dear First Minister,

Friends of the Earth Scotland was grateful for the invitation to meet with you recently in Bute House as part of your 'Climate Conversation'. We were pleased to hear you and the Cabinet Secretary reaffirm your commitment to climate action in Scotland and abroad. It was also illuminating to hear from those people in the global south who are campaigning for climate justice.

Ahead of your attendance at COP28, Friends of the Earth Scotland wanted to take this opportunity to reiterate our grave concerns about the proposed gas burning power plant at Peterhead. The International Energy Agency has been clear that there should be no new investment in oil and gas infrastructure if we are to have any hope of limiting dangerous global heating to the internationally agreed limit of 1.5C. UN Secretary-General António Guterres has called on the world to "end the fossil fuel age" and that investment in new fossil fuel infrastructure is "moral and economic madness".

The Scottish Government led the way by declaring financing for the loss and damage fund that would begin to pay for the damage to countries in the global south caused by extreme weather. We welcome the commitment of the Scottish Government to take this step and fully support your efforts to get other nations involved. However, if Scotland wants to be a world leader in tackling the causes of climate breakdown then **your Government cannot approve plans for a new gas burning power plant in Peterhead.**

The developer SSE has conceded in planning documents submitted to the Energy Consents Unit that “should both plants (at the site) operate simultaneously this will result in emissions increase [that] would represent 10.7% of the Scottish Carbon Budget in 2034.” The Scottish Government has already missed 8 out of its last 12 legally enshrined climate targets. An increase in climate emissions at the power station risks Scotland once again missing them.

The claim that the new plant at Peterhead would be able to produce ‘low carbon’ energy is based entirely on deeply unreliable carbon capture technology that proponents claim will be able to capture large quantities of carbon produced at the plant. A mounting body of global evidence shows that SSE’s claims of consistently capturing 90%- 95% of emissions is highly unlikely. Additional energy is required to power CCS which means that the capture rate would, if it works, likely be much lower. Furthermore, studies have shown that long term, safe and verified storage of carbon cannot be guaranteed.

CCS faces huge technical barriers at scale and no power plant project in the world has managed to successfully and consistently capture 90% of carbon emissions. A report by the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis described CCS as a “decarbonisation pipe dream”. Of the 13 CCS plants they examined, seven underperformed, two failed completely and one was mothballed. CCS being deployed in power generation is costly and unnecessary when other cheaper and already existing options are available including renewables, wind, solar and energy efficiency measures. We cannot afford to risk a just transition on a technology that has huge potential to fail when other options to successfully decarbonise exist.

The UK Government and Scottish Governments have both acknowledged that increased fossil fuel infrastructure will not keep us energy secure and will not lower energy bills for households. The UK imports around 50% of its gas, meaning we remain at the whim of international energy markets with no real security of supply or price. By increasing investment in renewables that are run in the public interest and are an infinite resource, we can better meet our energy needs and keep prices down.

Scotland cannot claim to be a global leader abroad while allowing damaging oil and gas infrastructure to be approved at home.

If the Scottish Government were to approve new gas at Peterhead, it would undermine the already fragile progress towards a just transition. It would also create demand for fossil fuels for decades to come, at a time when public policy should be geared to reduce use of oil and gas.

We welcomed your condemnation of the UK Government’s decision to approve the Rosebank oil field as the “wrong decision” but we call on you now to **make the right decision and block plans for a gas burning power plant in Peterhead.**

This is just one of our asks around COP28 but it is a hugely important one and will have serious repercussions for years to come. If you have time, we encourage you to speak to our colleagues from Friends of the Earth International who will be in attendance in person at COP28.

Again, we would like to thank you for the opportunity to participate in the Climate Conversation and we look forward to continuing to engage with yourself and the Scottish Government on how we can address the climate crisis in a fair and just way.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Malachy Clarke,
Public Affairs Manager
Friends of the Earth Scotland
Thorn House
5 Rose Street
Edinburgh
EH2 2PR

E: mclarke@foe.scot

T: 0131 243 2721