

# Is Scotland poised to phase out oil now?

The international race is on to see which countries will lead the transition into a new age of eco-friendly alternative energy sources.

And while Scotland may not have as big a problem as some others when it comes to pollutants, the country could be in a position to begin phasing out oil and become a European leader in the clean energy revolution.

It was a number of years ago that the idea of Scotland becoming a [renewable energy leader](#) first began. At that time, in 2011, it was forecasted that Scotland could earn £2 billion a year by exporting electricity and taking the lead on clean energy. At that time, the government had put forth an ambitious goal of reaching 100% renewable energy by 2020 – a goal that was not quite reached, but which laid an early foundation for a strong effort around this.



Nearly a decade later, Scotland has a fresh opportunity to make an ambitious push towards renewable energy. This opportunity has arisen in the form of a global oil crash that leaves the door wide open for countries interested in and prepared for energy transitions.

Questions about the [oil industry](#) in Scotland were asked in 2019. The slumping price of Brent crude over several years caused noticeable changes among those working in the industry, with the once-booming oil town of Aberdeen in particular feeling the effects. People who had worked in oil were already beginning to transition to new jobs, in some cases helping to decommission and dismantle the oil industry infrastructure itself. And this was all *before* the pandemic.

The pandemic has compounded the problem by effectively crushing oil markets around the world. The [trading price of oil](#) plummeted between January and the end of April 2020, due almost entirely to the fact that demand for the resource

abruptly evaporated around the world. And even though that same trading price has since risen, it remains visibly unstable, and weak by the standards of the industry. Without doubt, the industry has been damaged in an unprecedented way, and as a result renewable energy has its greatest opportunity yet to emerge in a more significant way.

The thinking around much of the world is that oil's struggles are likely to be compounded by shifting investment priorities. Already, money in the broader energy sector was beginning to drift away from oil and gas and toward renewables. And now, with oil so badly damaged, that shift is likely to intensify.

Alongside these changes, Scotland appears to be approaching the transition to renewables with new seriousness. The Committee on Climate Change recently argued in favour of the country becoming the first within the UK to achieve a [net-zero economy](#) – in part on the grounds that Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions already dropped 31% between 2008 and 2018.

This sort of effort, alongside a widespread desire to recover from the pandemic in a sustainable manner, puts Scotland in a position to accomplish something very ambitious. The country could look to phase out oil altogether, and become a true leader in the push for renewable energy.

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