



Stop Climate Chaos Scotland  
Thorn House  
5 Rose Street  
Edinburgh  
EH2 2PR

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon  
Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh  
EH99 1SP

25th October 2021

Dear First Minister,

A decision will soon be made at UK level on whether to approve extraction from the Cambo oil field west of Shetland. With the world far off track to be net zero by 2050, a failure by the UK Government to step in and block this would be a serious breach of global trust. Importantly, it would also badly tarnish Scotland's climate credentials. We warmly welcome your announcement that the Scottish Government will end support for unlimited recovery of oil and gas and your statement that it would be "fundamentally wrong" to "keep exploring for and extracting oil and gas until the last possible moment".<sup>1</sup> We therefore urge you to live up to these statements and stand strongly and publicly against Cambo.

Cambo is the second largest undeveloped field on the UK Continental Shelf, containing 800 million barrels of oil. The first phase seeks to extract 170 million barrels – the climate equivalent of running 18 coal-fired power stations for a year – and would continue until 2050: five years after Scotland is due to reach net-zero emissions. The second phase would continue beyond 2050, and aims for 'full-field development'<sup>2</sup>.

Approving Cambo would contradict the International Energy Agency which has said twice that to meet global net zero by 2050 and to limit heating to 1.5°C above pre-industrialised levels, there can be no new oil and gas fields approved for development<sup>3</sup>. The Agency instead says that urgent investment is needed in renewables, including to avoid further energy shocks like the current gas crisis.

The approval of Cambo would also go against the advice of the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres who, following the publication of the IPCC 'code-red' report, said "this report must sound a death knell for coal and fossil fuels, before they destroy our planet... countries should end all new fossil fuel exploration and production"<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/first-ministers-speech-scotlands-priorities-cop26/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.siccarpointenergy.co.uk/our-portfolio/corona-ridge-area>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.iea.org/news/pathway-to-critical-and-formidable-goal-of-net-zero-emissions-by-2050-is-narrow-but-brings-huge-benefits>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.un.org/press/en/2021/sqsm20847.doc.htm>



We welcomed your intervention urging the Prime Minister to “reassess” Cambo in the light of the climate emergency<sup>5</sup>. But this is not enough. The reality of the climate crisis is so devastating and the consequences of approving this field are so grave, that we urge you now, ahead of the UN climate summit COP26, to call for Cambo to be stopped. Drilling for new oil as the climate emergency pushes millions of people deeper into hunger and poverty is clearly incompatible and wrong.

We therefore believe there is no need for the Prime Minister’s climate compatibility checkpoint as the science is clear that no new oil and gas licences are compatible with limiting warming to 1.5°C. Over 2,000 scientists have called on governments around the world to end new fossil fuel expansion and phase out existing production, in line with 1.5°C, through a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty.<sup>6</sup>

Ensuring a just transition for the workers and communities currently working in the oil and gas industry is vital and will require long-term planning and investment. However, opening new oil fields, against the recommendations of the International Energy Agency, risks delaying necessary action towards building a renewable economy and increases the likelihood of a disorderly transition further down the line. The Just Transition Plans announced in the Scottish Government’s Programme for Government must be developed with workers and their unions, and in the context of the growing scientific consensus to end further expansion of production to stay within climate limits. Redirecting investment away from oil and gas and towards green energy – now – would help to create many thousands of new jobs in Scotland in clean industries that have a future.

The UN Production Gap report states that, “To meet Paris Agreement goals, all countries will need to wind down fossil fuel production, some more rapidly than others”<sup>7</sup>. This is in line with the principles of equity and climate justice: wealthy, developed nations who have a greater capacity to pay for the transition and a lower economic dependence on fossil fuels – like Scotland and the rest of the UK – must phase out more rapidly.

A substantial majority of the members of Scotland’s Climate Assembly were clear that, to be fair, Scotland must “act immediately so that future generations are not unfairly burdened with the responsibility of making change”<sup>8</sup>. Cambo would be a clear contradiction of this.

We urge you to quickly, clearly and publicly call for the rejection of Cambo and all new oil and gas projects, and support a managed phase-out from the North Sea in line with keeping global temperature rises to 1.5°C, while increasing renewables and ensuring a just transition for affected workers and communities.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-58186181>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.iamrenew.com/environment/news-pollution-fight/over-2000-scientists-academics-call-for-a-fossil-fuel-non-proliferation-treaty/>

<sup>7</sup> [https://productiongap.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/PGR2020\\_FullRprt\\_web.pdf](https://productiongap.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/PGR2020_FullRprt_web.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.climateassembly.scot/sites/default/files/inline-files/Scotland%27s%20Climate%20Assembly%20-%20Interim%20Report.pdf>



To take a stand now would demonstrate Scotland's true leadership and commitment to climate justice ahead of COP26.

Yours sincerely,

Tom Ballantine  
Chair of Stop Climate Chaos Scotland

With the support of our members:

