

Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
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October 2021

Dear Prime Minister,

With less than two weeks until COP 26, we are writing to you as concerned climate scientists and academics, urging you to take bolder action on UK oil and gas policy.

Recent events have highlighted the worsening impacts of the climate crisis, with heat waves and forest fires in North America, Turkey and Greece, and flooding in Germany and the UK. Indeed, every inhabited region of the planet is now affected by extremes of heat, precipitation, and drought, increasingly compounded. The costs - human, economic, ecological - of delay are evermore unsustainable.

On 9th August, the IPCC released their [starkest warning yet](#) on the dangers posed to all by climate change. It is unequivocal that human influence, principally the burning of fossil fuels, has caused widespread and rapid changes to the planet. The UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres described these findings as 'Code red for humanity', and has called on countries to 'end all new fossil fuel exploration and production, and shift fossil fuel subsidies into renewable energy.'

No sector exemplifies the gap between scientific necessity and planned investment more starkly than oil and gas. In May, the International Energy Agency's [net zero 2050 roadmap](#) highlighted that Paris-aligned decarbonisation does not allow for investment in new oil and gas fields. In fact, a recent paper in [Nature](#) has found that 60% of existing oil and gas reserves must remain unburnt in order to align supply with 1.5°C. The UNEP's [production gap report](#) demonstrated that between now and 2030 global production of oil and gas must decline by 4% and 3% respectively, with developed economies such as the UK reducing supply most rapidly. Approving the Cambo oil field off Shetland would be flatly inconsistent with the science and guidance above. Moreover it will undermine the UK's credibility in the eyes of its international partners at a time when COP26 diplomacy is rightly seeking to deepen climate ambition. It is vital that the UK, as host of COP26, delivers outcomes in Glasgow to get the world on track for 1.5°C. To do this, the UK must demonstrate its commitment to act in the interests of the planet and foster global cooperation on climate change.

We are calling on you to bring forward measures to:

- **Stop investment and licensing for new oil and gas fields;**
- **End the policy of Maximising Economic Recovery from North Sea oil and gas;**
- **Introduce ambitious fossil fuel demand management policies to obviate the risk of future oil and gas imports;**
- **Ensure a managed and just transition away from oil and gas production, redirect investment towards low-carbon industries, and ensure affected workers are able to transfer smoothly into these new sectors.**

These combined measures will be essential to deliver the 6th Carbon Budget and meet the country's net zero target. They are also exactly the sorts of action which the IPCC says will "lead within years to discernible effects on greenhouse gas and aerosol concentrations [under which] discernible differences in trends of global surface temperature would begin to emerge from natural variability within around 20 years..." [SPM, D.2]

It is still possible to act decisively against climate change. Actions taken in the year of COP26 will set the course for a critical decade of action on climate change. The UK has the opportunity to drive the systemic change needed to avoid the worst of climate change and deliver quality jobs and economic benefits.

The science is clear on the need to end investment in new oil and gas development. Now is the time for bold political action.

Yours sincerely,

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