

MOTION TO EAST LOTHIAN COUNCIL

25 February 2025

Motion in Support of a Global Fossil Fuel Non-proliferation Treaty

Preamble

1. Weather records have now confirmed that 2024 was the first year in which the planet was consistently more than 1.5C higher than pre-industrial baseline temperatures, indicating that the goal of the Paris agreement to keep warming below that threshold, is in jeopardy.¹
2. East Lothian Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 and a Nature Emergency in 2023. Council also voted unanimously in 2022 to write to the Lothian Pension Fund expressing support for divestment of the fund's public sector pension investments from businesses whose activity is the extraction and burning of fossil fuels. LPF has since increased the value of its shares in fossil fuel companies.² Recent strategies like the Local Economy Strategy, LHEES strategy, the Local Housing Strategy, the Tree and Woodland Strategy and two plans currently under development – the Local Development Plan 2 and the updated Climate Change Strategy – have all provided a chance for Members to debate the climate crisis and East Lothian's response to it. We know we need to do things differently if we are to pass on a thriving county to future generations.
3. The scientific consensus is clear that human activities are primarily responsible for accelerating global climate change, and that the climate crisis now represents one of the preeminent threats to global civilization.
4. The International Energy Agency stated in its May 2021 report "Net Zero by 2050" that in order to reach that goal there should be no new oil or gas fields, or new coal mines, as of that moment.³ The Paris Climate Agreement is silent on coal, oil and gas, an omission with respect to the supply and production of fossil fuels (the largest source of greenhouse gases) that needs to be collectively addressed by other means.
5. A new global initiative is underway calling for a Fossil Fuel Non-proliferation Treaty.⁴ Although a treaty text has not yet been agreed, the campaign follows three principles:
 - a. plan the end of new fossil fuel exploration and expansion;
 - b. phase out existing production in line with the global commitment to limit warming to 1.5°C; and
 - c. accelerate equitable transition plans globally.
6. Support for a treaty has been pledged by 14 national governments, the World Health Organisation, the European Parliament, 10 indigenous nations, and hundreds of local governments including Edinburgh, Glasgow, and North Ayrshire.

¹ <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/about-us/news-and-media/media-centre/weather-and-climate-news/2025/2024-record-breaking-watershed-year-for-global-climate>

² <https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/lothian-edinburgh-fossil-fuels-pensions-4734881>

³ <https://www.iea.org/reports/net-zero-by-2050>

⁴ <https://fossilfueltreaty.org/>

7. East Lothian has a part to play in all three of the demands from the Treaty campaign:
- a. End new fossil fuel exploration: the huge development of renewable generation in East Lothian provides alternative energy sources that mean we have no need to drill in new sites for fossil fuels;
 - b. Phase out existing production: the energy generated in East Lothian through renewables (and Torness, until 2030) can provide energy as fossil fuel extraction falls. The potential for heat recovery from industrial sources and large-scale district heating will cut demand for oil and gas, and provide huge economic opportunity to residents and investors alike;
 - c. Accelerate equitable transition plans globally: the recent redundancy announcements at Grangemouth show why it is so important to plan the energy transition and not leave workers at the mercy of market forces. All levels of government have a part to play to ensure that skilled job opportunities match up to availability of skilled workforce and no one is left behind.

Therefore, East Lothian Council:

- Recognises the severity of the global climate crisis and the vulnerability of East Lothian, as a coastal and agricultural county, to the effects of climate breakdown;
- Notes that the effects of climate change are likely to fall disproportionately on those who are already more vulnerable, and that this is true locally as well as globally;
- Notes also that East Lothian is uniquely placed to deliver clean energy in a post-fossil fuel economy and that the Just Transition has the potential to create high-quality jobs in East Lothian, as well as secure and affordable heat and electricity;
- Endorses the calls for a Global Fossil Fuel Non-proliferation Treaty and calls upon the Scottish and UK governments, as well as CoSLA, to do the same.
- Asks that the Leader of the Council writes to the First Minister of Scotland, to the UK Secretary of State for Net Zero, and to the Leader of CoSLA, to ask them publicly to endorse the principle of a treaty based on three pillars: non-proliferation; a fair phase-out of fossil fuels; and a just transition.

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Date: 13 February 2025

Seconded by (name): John McMillan

Date: 13 February 2025

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Date: 13 February 2025