

Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee
Wednesday 11 February 2026
4th Meeting, 2026 (Session 6)

PE2160: Introduce an energy strategy

Introduction

Petitioner Tina Dawn Marshall

Petition summary Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to publish its Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan to address the environment, infrastructure, and land use.

Webpage <https://petitions.parliament.scot/petitions/PE2160>

1. [The Committee last considered this petition at its meeting on 24 September 2025](#). At that meeting, the Committee agreed to write to the Scottish Government and to include this petition as part of a thematic evidence session with the Cabinet Secretary for Climate Action and Energy.
2. [On 14 January 2026](#), the Committee took evidence on thematic energy issues raised across a number of petitions, including this petition.
3. The petition summary is included in **Annexe A** and the Official Report of the Committee's last consideration of this petition is at **Annexe B**.
4. The Committee has received new written submissions from the Cabinet Secretary for Climate Action and Energy, and the Petitioner, which are set out in **Annexe C**.
5. [Written submissions received prior to the Committee's last consideration can be found on the petition's webpage](#).
6. [Further background information about this petition can be found in the SPICe briefing](#) for this petition.
7. [The Scottish Government gave its initial response to the petition on 10 June 2025](#).
8. Every petition collects signatures while it remains under consideration. At the time of writing, 216 signatures have been received on this petition.

Action

9. The Committee is invited to consider what action it wishes to take.

Clerks to the Committee
February 2026

Annexe A: Summary of petition

PE2160: Introduce an energy strategy

Petitioner

Tina Dawn Marshall

Date Lodged

8 May 2025

Petition summary

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to publish its Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan to address the environment, infrastructure, and land use.

Background information

As windfarms march across Scotland, sending the energy south, we seem to think that wind is the only answer. We have started to look at other technologies such as solar, but again this is problematic as the solar farms in England take up precious agricultural land.

Annexe B: Extract from Official Report of last consideration of PE2160 on 24 September 2025

The Convener: PE2160, lodged by Tina Dawn Marshall, calls on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to publish its energy strategy and just transition plan to address environmental, infrastructure and land use issues. Our parliamentary colleague Douglas Lumsden joins us to speak to the petition. I think that this is a return ticket. Having only just walked out the door, Mr Lumsden has beaten a path back to join us. Good morning—well, almost good afternoon—to you.

The SPICe briefing reminds us that the Scottish Government's first energy strategy was published in 2017. That was followed by a draft energy strategy and just transition plan, which was published for consultation in 2023. The finalised version is still awaiting publication.

In its response, the Scottish Government states that the issues in its draft energy strategy and just transition plan are affected by on-going developments in the UK Government's energy policy, including consultations for which responses have not yet been published, as well as various court cases. It stresses that it is taking sufficient time to analyse those developments and their impact on Scotland.

In terms of alternative action, the Government highlights its 2024 green industrial strategy, as well as its investment in skills development through its just transition fund. It also flags the publication over the course of this year of a bioenergy policy statement, the solar vision for Scotland, the sectoral marine plan 2 and an offshore wind policy statement. It also states that, most important of all, it expects to publish its draft climate change plan later this year, which will be accompanied by a consultation.

We have also received submissions from the petitioner, who mentions a range of on-going concerns in the absence of an energy strategy and just transition plan.

Mr Lumsden, the floor is yours.

Douglas Lumsden (North East Scotland) (Con): Thank you, convener. It is good to be back.

I fully support the petitioner's call for the Scottish Government to publish its energy strategy and I hope that the committee has more luck than me in that regard. I checked in the Official Report and found that, in the past 18 months, I have asked the Government about this issue 16 times and have received no answer—perhaps that is a reflection on me.

The Convener: So, you did not ask 1,000 times.

Douglas Lumsden: No, just the 16 times, convener.

I read the Government's response to the committee with interest. It claims that it is taking time to analyse and reflect on developments, but it has been two and a half years since it published its draft policy. How long does it need? We have had two

and a half years of uncertainty, of a presumption against oil and gas and of no just transition plan, while thousands of jobs are being lost in the North Sea.

In all that time, in the absence of a strategy, we have had a vacuum. Perhaps that was the Government's aim, because that vacuum is being filled by a presumption in favour of unlimited and expensive onshore and offshore wind and all the infrastructure that comes with it. We must also acknowledge that generation and demand happen in different regions, so the future will be mega pylons and substations, which will damage much of our beautiful rural areas.

As we heard in relation to the previous petition about hydrogen, there is no plan regarding how much hydrogen will be produced. Further, battery storage is out of control. The sector is often referred to as the wild west, as it seems to be a money-making scheme in which companies buy up cheap electricity in periods when our intermittent supply builds up a surplus and sell it back when prices are high.

We know that the Scottish Government is blocking new nuclear power stations, but we do not know what its stance is on new gas-powered stations, for example. We must presume that, in the future, when the wind does not blow, base load will be met by imports. We should be concerned about grid stability as the inertia from traditional power stations is withdrawn—Fergus Ewing often brings that up in the chamber. All of that matters because we need to plan properly if we are to avoid blackouts such as we have seen in Spain.

I am coming to the conclusion that the reason why the Government is not coming forward with an energy strategy is because that would mean that it would have to be honest with people about its vision, which, I presume, is to have rural communities covered in battery storage, onshore wind farms, substations and mega pylons.

Our rural communities are mobilising against that. We heard earlier about the meeting in Inverness, where the Highlands community councils came together. We have a similar meeting coming up soon in Aberdeenshire, and the same thing is happening in Perthshire and the Borders, where people have the exact same fears. People feel that they are being ignored, and they just want some clarity and honesty from the Government.

For the sake of our rural communities, and for the sake of our oil and gas workers, I urge the committee to again ask the Scottish Government to set out some timescales so that we can have some clarity.

The Convener: Thank you, Mr Lumsden. You asked how long the Government needs to reflect on the matter. If you had been with us earlier, during our session with the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care, you would have heard that we have been reflecting on private ambulance regulation since 2012, so two and a half years might not seem so long after all. However, you have raised important issues. Do members have suggestions on how to proceed?

Maurice Golden: I am concerned that the Scottish Government has indicated that, due to “on-going developments”, it has been unable to produce its energy strategy. In my entire time working in the energy sector, I do not think that there has ever been a time when there have not been “on-going developments” in some part of the

sector. I do not see that as any reason for what has been a two-and-a-half-year stall on the strategy.

I stand to be corrected. If, over the past 15 years, there has been a point when there has been no on-going development in the sector, the Scottish Government will surely write to the committee about that.

Given that two and a half years have passed, with agencies and dozens of civil service staff poring over the strategy, the Scottish Government could, at the very least, provide information on where it is with the strategy, producing an “energy strategy 1.0”, rather than risking further delay, even though the strategy will need to be updated. I would certainly offer my help to the Government in delivering that.

The issue should be added as part of the thematic session with the Cabinet Secretary for Climate Action and Energy, which is looking a lot more interesting after today’s discussion.

The Convener: It is certainly looking a lot busier.

Fergus Ewing: Mr Lumsden has raised some salient points, many of which I agree with. Those include the threat to the stability of the grid from the impending closure of nuclear stations and the uncertainty surrounding Peterhead. Without base load and back-up, it is more difficult to provide stability and synchronicity—and, therefore, inertia—to the grid. This is a technical topic, where more facts, more scientific analysis and less politics would be extremely useful in Britain.

Aside from that, the Robert Gordon University report, which I think was written by Paul de Leeuw, whom I know, warned that the oil and gas industry in the UK could lose 400 jobs every fortnight, which is a staggering figure. There is a lot more that could be said, in particular that Britain cannot have industry unless energy costs are on a par with those of our European neighbours, at least—which they are not. Therefore, industry is likely to cease to exist in Britain, where it is energy intensive, within the next five years. That is a point that one does not hear very much.

I have raised a few issues, and my suggestion as to what we do with the petition is this. I hesitate to recommend closing the petition, although I know that the pressure is there. Instead, we should write to the Government, suggesting that there should be a full debate on the matter in the Parliament. I suggest that we have two full days on energy, or at least one day, which would allow us to have a proper debate, with lengthy contributions from people—from all parties—who have an interest in the topic. It is a complicated, wide-ranging debate.

The idea that we cannot have an energy policy because of developments, as Mr Lumsden has described, is absurd. There are developments all the time. That is not a reason for not having a policy; it is a pretext.

It is reasonable for us to suggest that the degree of interest in the matter is such that there should be a parliamentary debate on it. I note that the petitioner is a student studying the economics of renewable energy at Heriot-Watt University, and she has made a lot of useful points to us. We should raise the issues with the Cabinet Secretary for Climate Action and Energy at the thematic evidence session that we

will be having soon. That will probably have to be quite a long session. I am sure that many members would wish to participate, and rightly so.

The Convener: Two colleagues have suggested that we add the matter to the thematic session. In advance of that, we should write a letter asking where we currently stand with the energy strategy. There is also Mr Ewing's additional suggestion to the cabinet secretary that, in addition to our addressing the subject in a thematic committee session, it would be useful for the Parliament to consider the issues in a chamber debate. We can suggest that accordingly. We will keep the petition open.

Members *indicated agreement.*

The Convener: Thank you, Mr Lumsden.

Douglas Lumsden: Thank you.

Annexe C: Written submissions

Cabinet Secretary for Climate Action and Energy written submission, 30 October 2025

PE2160/D: Introduce an energy strategy

Further to your letter of 2 October 2025 regarding petition PE2160 on introducing an energy strategy, I am writing to provide an update on the Scottish Government's Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan, as requested by the Committee.

Since the draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan was published, there have been significant changes in the energy sector across Great Britain. Most notably, this includes the establishment of the National Energy System Operator (NESO), with a clear remit to lead on strategic energy system planning. On 22nd October 2024, the Scottish Government jointly commissioned NESO to produce a Strategic Spatial Energy Plan (SSEP) for Great Britain (GB). The SSEP is intended to optimise the transition to clean, affordable and secure energy by providing greater clarity on the shape of our future energy system. This includes setting out a long-term view of what energy sources are needed to reach net zero, and their most optimal locations across GB.

The SSEP is complemented by NESO's role in providing regional energy strategic planning. I welcomed Ofgem's decision to create Regional Energy Strategic Planners across Great Britain, including a Regional Energy Strategic Plan (RESP) for Scotland, in recognition of the need for democratic decision making in local energy planning and the need to improve understanding of network infrastructure requirements in local areas.

We will continue to work closely with NESO on the SSEP and the RESP as they develop to ensure they align with and respect devolved powers, planning mechanisms and ambitions, deliver real benefits for the people and communities of Scotland, and support our ongoing efforts for a just transition.

A further set of considerations for Scotland's energy strategy is the approach taken by the UK Government in key reserved policy areas for offshore oil and gas, including the regulatory and fiscal regimes for the North Sea. The judgements and issues in the Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan are, therefore, informed by ongoing developments in the UK Government's energy policy and by recent court decisions.

Whilst many of these key policy levers remain reserved, the Scottish Government remains committed to doing what we can to ensure the skills, experience and expertise of Scotland's valued oil and gas workers can support a just energy transition. More than £120 million has already been invested in the North East through our Just Transition Fund and the Energy Transition Fund to support the region's transition to net zero. This funding has helped create green jobs, support innovation, and secure the highly skilled workforce of the future.

I am also pleased to update you that we have recently published many policy decisions on energy, including publication of our Green Industrial Strategy last year

(September 2024) which set out how Scotland can seize the economic opportunities of the global transition to net zero. We have also consulted on: Community Benefits from Net Zero Developments (December 2024); our draft Updated Sectoral Marine Plan for Offshore Wind Energy (May 2025); an Update to the Offshore Wind Policy Statement (June 2025); and the Scottish Marine Recovery Fund (August 2025).

In addition, this autumn we will publish a draft Climate Change Plan outlining how the Scottish Government intends to meet emissions reduction targets up to 2040 across all sectors of the economy, including the energy sector. We will ensure the Plan aligns with our just transition principles. In February, we convened an Offshore Wind Skills Short-Life Working Group with industry and public sector partners to develop an Offshore Wind Skills Action Plan, which will be published imminently.

I note that the petition seeks to address issues related to land use, and I would like to inform the Committee that the Scottish Government is currently developing its fourth Land Use Strategy, due for publication by end of March 2026. This strategy recognises that Scotland's land and the natural capital it supports is one of our most valuable assets. It will focus on the integrated nature of our land and the many demands placed upon it. By understanding the multiple and sometimes conflicting relationships, we can look to secure the fine balance needed to allow our land to contribute sustainably to multiple long term national priorities. Scottish Ministers' decisions on energy and land use are also guided by National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4), which was approved by the Scottish Parliament in 2023. This ensures that the planning system enables the sustainable growth of the renewable energy sector while continuing to protect our most valued natural assets and cultural heritage.

I understand the continued interest in issues related to energy given its importance to the economy and people of Scotland. I have therefore carefully considered the Committee's request to schedule a Chamber debate on the energy strategy. However, for the reasons outlined in this letter, I do not believe a Chamber debate is required at this time.

I note the Committee's invitation to me to provide evidence on the themes raised in a number of energy-related petitions and would be happy to meet with the Committee as required.

Yours sincerely,

GILLIAN MARTIN

Petitioner written submission, 18 November 2025

PE2160/E: Introduce an energy strategy

The Cabinet Secretary for Climate Action and Energy provided an update on the Scottish Government's Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan, as requested by the Committee.

The Just Transition Commission has not yet made its determination for the Caithness and Sutherland area, and it will not do so until January 2026.

This matter should be addressed first, followed by a debate on energy.

Petitioner written submission, 5 December 2025

PE2160/F: Introduce an energy strategy

The petitioner refers to point the following:

1. In addition to the windfarms, there are planning applications for many Battery Energy Storage Systems which should also be taken into account.
2. The matter of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code, which underpins infrastructure for climate change, should also be taken into consideration. There is specifically no provision for disabled access or electric bikes and scooters. The latter which are driven by motors, in contravention of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2016.
3. The Aarhus Convention is created to empower the role of citizens and civil society organisations in environmental matters and is founded on the principles of participative democracy.

The Aarhus Convention establishes a number of rights to the individuals and civil society organizations with regard to the environment. The Parties to the Convention are required to make the necessary provisions so that public authorities, at a national, regional or local level, will contribute to these rights to become effective. The Aarhus Convention provides for:

Access to environmental information:

- The right of the citizens to receive environmental information that is held by public authorities

Public participation in environmental decision making:

- The right of the citizens to participate in preparing plans, programmes, policies, and legislation that may affect the environment.

Access to justice:

- The right of the citizens to have access to review procedures when their rights with respect to access to information or public participation have been violated.

The Convention's Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTRs) was adopted at the Fifth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference in Kiev, Ukraine, in May 2003 and entered into force in October 2009. Its objective is to enhance public access to information through the establishment of coherent, nationwide pollutant release and transfer registers (PRTRs). PRTRs are inventories of pollution from industrial sites and other sources.

To date, this has not been permitted.

These points should be taken into account during the evidence session.

I have made it clear to the Enterprise company HIE that I will have no involvement after 14 January 2026, unless I am paid.

Just because I have the experience and qualifications to deal with these matters, does not mean that I am doing it free of charge, especially as the MSPs in the Highlands do not have the courtesy to respond to emails or phone calls.

The information will simply be in Environmental News, which will be published at the end of January.

Petitioner written submission, 22 January 2026

PE2160/G: Introduce an energy strategy

At the meeting of the Petitions Committee on 14 January 2026, the Cabinet Secretary indicated that she did not know when the Government's energy strategy would be published, but she was hopeful it will be supplied by 2027, when NESO is due to deliver the Strategic Spatial Energy Plan (SSEP).

Wind energy, which is so predominant currently, cannot be the only source of energy, and other sectors are not realistically being considered in technical terms. Nuclear is not being considered, anaerobic digestion is low down the list, despite the northern Highlands being an agricultural area. For example, the development of gas from hydrogen for homes is unstable and there are still concerns about battery energy storage, especially in the Northern Highlands where there are insufficient firefighting resources. Dounreay is now connected directly to the National Grid. One expert has explained to me that the battery storage is DC and the grid AC at somewhere around 33,000v, so it would have to go through inverters that will produce heat (and noise). If they are connected they would probably do the power either way and the power going in or out of the batteries at any significant load will cause a good deal of heat that has to be dealt with, though a cooling system (loads of EVs globally going into thermal runaway whilst charging) and fast charging can cause swelling of the individual cells within the modules. Things could work well if the units themselves are perfect and the cooling really good. Batteries also need a rest and slower charging to keep them in good health. The Orkney Windfarm has been put on hold and there are serious concerns around Scotwind.

There are now more difficulties around decisions due to the Energy Consents Units now being outwith the overall responsibility of the Cabinet Secretary for Climate Action and Energy. This is confusing for the communities and makes even more work for them, much of it on a voluntary basis. They have to raise money to pay consultants which is not sustainable in the long term.

The Minister mentioned in her address that she had had discussions with Scottish Water. Desalination plants are used in Spain, driven by solar, in the main. The petitioner requests that the matter be considered at the next meeting.

I have input to the consultation on the MW increase above 50MW. I continue to work closely with the developers on alleviating some of the problems of lack of consultation and contingency planning. I would request that the Committee focus on

energy mix and certainly costs of dispatching the various energy generation methods.

There is a concern about impacts on tourism. In a recent meeting with Edward Mountain MSP regarding the Climate Change Plan, he said “you have a plan, but no route map and no costings”.