

Big Polluters vs Scotland: an Investigation

Ric Lander, 2nd July 2025

Context: Friends of the Earth Scotland seeking a just transition from fossil fuels

Protecting
workers and
communities



Public
transport



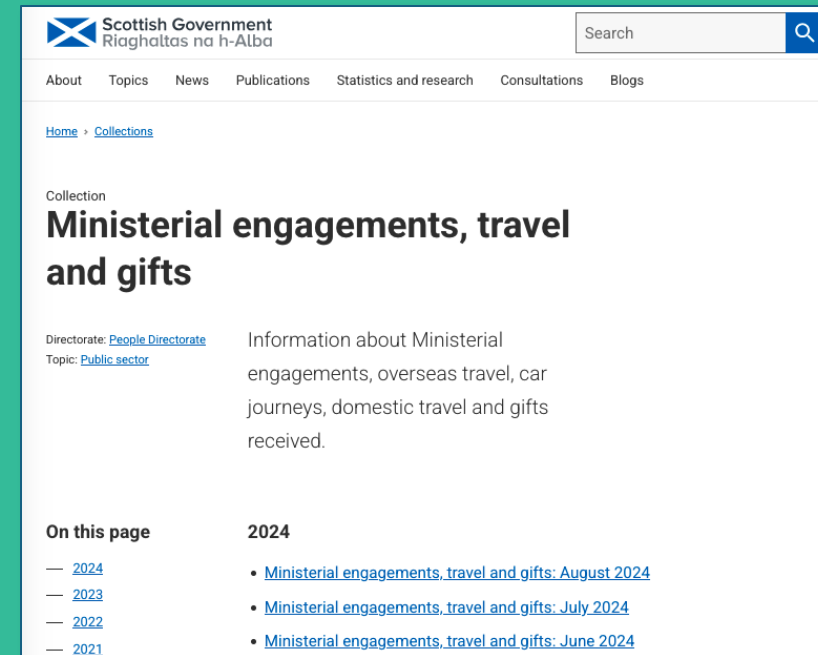
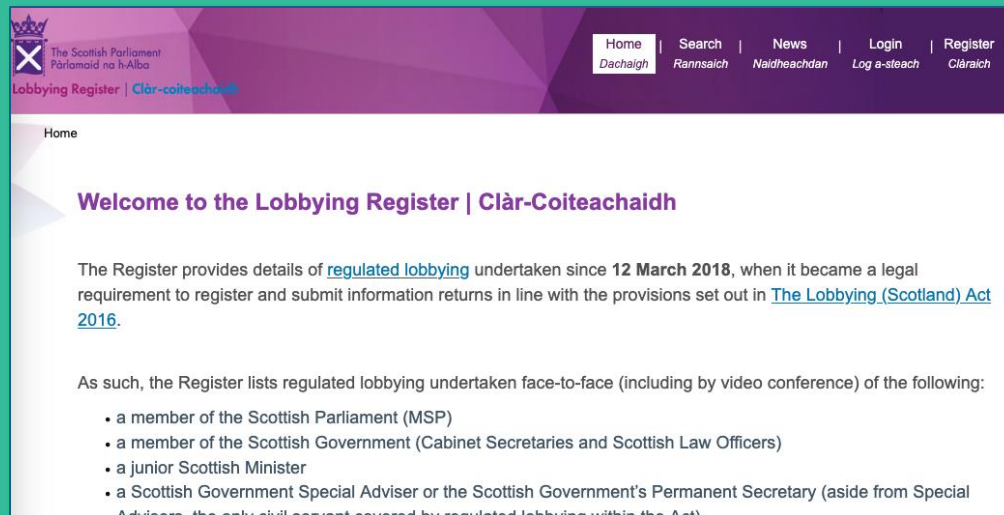
**Help stop Scotland's
biggest climate polluter
getting even worse.**

Why focus on lobbying?

“People of the same trade seldom meet together, even for merriment and diversion, but the conversation ends in a conspiracy against the public”

Adam Smith, Wealth of Nations (1776) bk. 1, ch. 10

Our key sources



2023 Findings

790

Fossil fuel industry lobbying
engagements with MSPs

6
meetings
a week

295

Ministers inc. the First
Minister

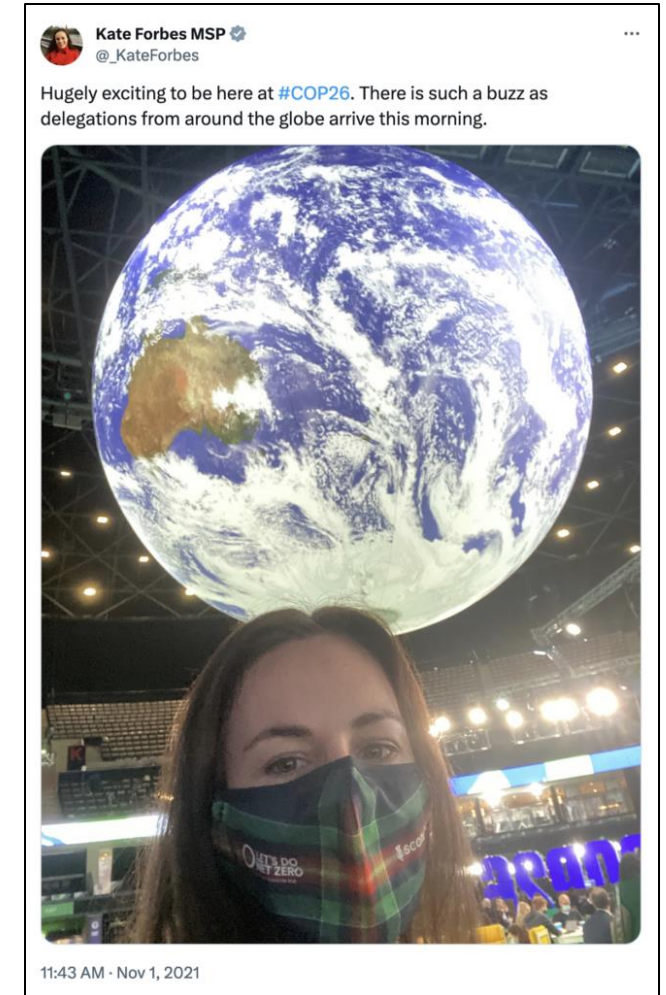


Lobbying patterns

- Lobbying appeared to be intensifying
- Official records showed that oil lobbyists were increasingly adopting cover stories, stating they simply wanted to talk about 'net zero'
- Registered lobbying took place mostly in the Scottish Parliament but business and cultural venues were important as were party conferenced

Lobbying examples

- 'Doors wide open' at the SNP conference
- Oil companies attend a banquet at Edinburgh Castle
- Kate Forbes meets Equinor inside the UN climate talks





Friends of the Earth Scotland

Call for ban on 'irresponsible' lobbying by oil and gas firms

By ILONA AMOS

Climate campaigners are calling for the Scottish Government to ban "irresponsible" lobbying by companies looking to drill for more oil and gas in the North Sea.

The call comes after analysis of official records and minutes of discussions revealed a series of oil industry state-owned energy firms which has plans to develop the massive Rosebank oil field in the North Sea.

The meetings were among more than 200 held with petroleum lobbyists over the past four years, which were highlighted in the Scotland on Sunday last month.

Records show that representatives from Equinor – which holds the license for Rosebank



Scotland on Sunday

Yousaf urged to end 'open door' access for fossil fuel lobby

Cabinet members met oil and gas agents nearly 40 times and minister went to Florence opera with bosses

EXCLUSIVE
By MARTIN MCILVAHLIN
Investigative Correspondent

Standard of politics the loser in SNP blame game

Euan McCollum

Scottish ministers have met with lobbyists from oil and gas more than 200 times over the past four years, according to a leading environmental campaign group.

Friends of the Earth Scotland (FoE) has called on First Minister Humza Yousaf to end the government's 'open door' policy towards major fossil fuel firms.

The FoE analysis found nearly 40 engagements held by cabinet members with lobbyists. The "shocking" volume of lobbying also swayed ministerial decisions



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'Polluting politics'? Concern over 'hundreds' of meetings between MSPs and fossil fuel lobbyists



EXCLUSIVE Fossil fuel chiefs are accused of 'polluting politics' after meeting with MSPs 800 times

Scots politicians accused of 'welcoming polluters with open arms' as we reveal the true scale of oil and gas sector lobbying

By David Bol

CAMPAIGNERS are demanding rules limiting the tobacco industry from influencing policy to protect the climate after it was revealed MSPs have held almost 800 meetings with fossil fuel lobbyists over two years.

The revelation shows that lobbyists from oil and gas have met more than once a day since the 2021 Holyrood election, including inside UN crunch climate talks.

The analysis lays bare discussions between politicians and fossil fuel chiefs at glitzy receptions and on foreign trips.

See Pages 4 and 5



Sanctions on Scots companies for aiding Kremlin



It is the second part of The Herald's series on Scottish shell companies, we believe are being used to aid Russia's war effort

David Leask: See Pages 6 and 7

FOOD AND DRINK EXCLUSIVE 'I was too macho to speak' Inside Scottish hospitality's mental health epidemic

Sarah Campbell: Pages 12 and 13



FM YOUSAF STORY EMBARGOED UNTIL SUNDAY MORNING



5



Kate waterhouse

The Princess of Wales won't be seeded player to win the

The SUN

Sunday Newspaper Of

BLUE FUNK Oil and gas lobbyists in 100 talks with government

Climate campaigners hit out at meetings to discuss controversial blue, green and grey hydrogen

PAGES 8&9



SENT HOME



massive scale of discussions between Holyrood politicians and oil and gas industry

By David Bol

Public Affairs Correspondent

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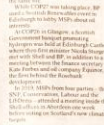
See Pages 4 and 5

Climate failures

The climate crisis is a global emergency and the Scottish Government must take action to protect the planet and its people.

Climate activists are demanding that the Scottish Government take action to protect the planet and its people.

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Ministerial Code Complaint, Friends of the Earth Scotland

Dear John Swinney MSP,

Breaches of ministerial code regarding SSE and Equinor's application for new gas-fired power station at Peterhead, Aberdeenshire

This is a complaint regarding breaches of the Scottish Ministerial Code (2023 edition - 'the Ministerial Code')¹.

It is based on a review of monthly "Ministerial engagements, travel and gifts"² reports and the Scottish Parliament Lobbying Register³ conducted using data available as of 28th March 2024.

This complaint arises from the conduct of several Ministers of the Scottish Government in relation to the application made by SSE and Equinor ('the developers') under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 for consent to build a gas-fired power station and carbon capture plant at Peterhead ('the Peterhead application').

The Peterhead application was received by the Scottish Ministers on 18th February 2022 and is under consideration by the Energy Consents Unit (reference: ECU00003433).

This complaint alleges that:

- A. Actions by individual Ministers have prejudiced the energy consents process. (10 breaches)



**Complaint
sent to
Scottish
Govt.**

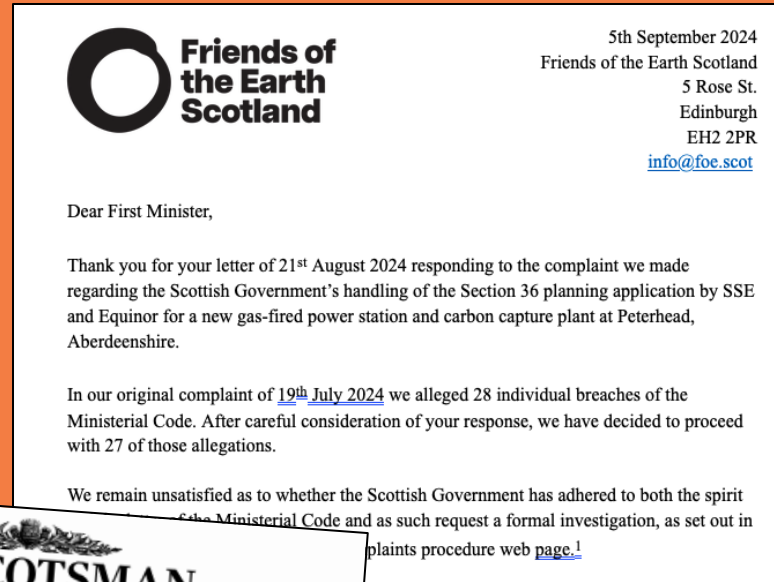


Formal complaint made

First Minister rejects claims

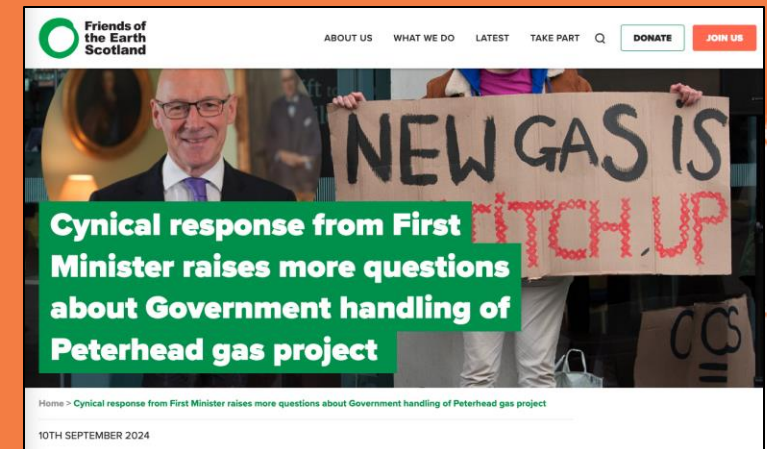


Press work



MSPs briefed

Webpage and e-news for supporters



Then what?

**First Minister
rejects claims
again but...**

**...plant not yet
approved and...**

**...SSE having to rewrite
environmental
assessment**

World Health Organisation Framework Convention on Tobacco



‘Decision-makers should interact with the tobacco industry only when and to the extent strictly necessary to enable them to effectively regulate the tobacco industry and tobacco products... where interactions with the tobacco industry are necessary, Parties should ensure that such interactions are conducted transparently.’

How much work is all this?

3 months of work over 9 months:

data collection

→ verification

→ FOIs

→ review

→ complaint

→ response



Coordinated effort of **research, advocacy** and **press/comms**

Big Polluters vs Scotland

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