

# Exploring public support for climate action and renewables in resource-rich economies: The case of Scotland

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## Abstract

Scotland offers a case study of a country with significant fossil energy resources that has recently moved to rapidly decarbonize its economy and deploy renewable energy sources. We review the key policies that have facilitated a 47% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from 1990 levels and almost 75% of Scottish electricity being produced from renewable energy. Public views on climate policy, renewable energy, and low-carbon technologies are explored using focus groups we conducted in Aberdeen, Peterhead, and Edinburgh and citizens' juries held in Aberdeen and Edinburgh. The deliberative processes reveal strong public support for continued diversification of Scotland's energy portfolio to include more renewable energy sources, particularly at the local level. We also found support for a greater role for state-led involvement in the energy sector. Pro-renewables sentiments and skepticism of industry pervade even in Aberdeen, the main UK hub for oil and gas exploration, alongside support for further exploration of low-carbon technologies such as carbon capture and storage (CCS). Although Peterhead stood to benefit from a major CCS project, there was little awareness of the proposed project among residents nor its cancellation. Finally, we argue deliberative processes can help both policy-makers and developers gauge where they can (and cannot) expect support.

**Keywords** Citizens' jury; focus groups; energy transition; climate policy; renewable energy; low-carbon technologies; Scotland; carbon capture and storage

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