



HL Bill 49 of 2023–24

Offshore Petroleum Licensing Bill

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The [Offshore Petroleum Licensing Bill](#) is a government bill. It was announced in the King's Speech on 7 November 2023 and was introduced to the House of Commons the following day. Its second reading took place on 22 January 2024, and it passed its remaining stages in the House of Commons unamended on 20 February 2024. The bill was introduced in the House of Lords on 21 February 2024 and its second reading is scheduled to take place on 26 March 2024.

The bill would mandate that the oil and gas regulator, the North Sea Transition Authority, hold annual licensing rounds for offshore petroleum production, subject to two tests being met. First, that the carbon intensity of domestic natural gas is lower than the carbon intensity of liquified natural gas imported into the United Kingdom. Second, that the UK is projected to remain a net importer of both oil and gas.

The government has argued that this bill will increase investor confidence in the oil and gas sector and reduce the UK's dependence on higher-emission imports from overseas. However, the bill was opposed by Labour, the SNP and the Liberal Democrats as it passed through the House of Commons. Opponents of the bill argued that it would not make a difference to the UK's energy security—given that any additional oil and gas produced as a result of the bill would be traded on international markets—and that expanding oil and gas production was incompatible with the UK's climate change commitments.





I. Background to the bill

The bill was announced as part of the King's Speech on 7 November 2023 and was introduced to the House of Commons the following day. The bill would mandate that the oil and gas regulator hold annual licensing rounds for offshore petroleum production, subject to two tests being met.

I.1 The licensing of offshore petroleum production

Companies producing oil and gas in the UK's offshore areas are required to hold a licence that grants them exclusivity over a specific patch, or patches, of sea ('blocks'). The North Sea Transition Authority (NSTA), the regulator of oil and gas production in the UK, is responsible for issuing those licences. The decision on when to hold licensing rounds rests with the NSTA and there is no formal requirement that licencing rounds be run on a regular basis. In the years leading up to 2019 licensing rounds tended to be held annually, however, there has only been one licensing round since then.¹

In undertaking its duties, the NSTA is subject to certain statutory obligations. Section 9A of the [Petroleum Act 1998](#) sets out the 'principal objective' of the oil and gas regulator as "maximising the economic recovery of UK petroleum". Section 8 of the [Energy Act 2016](#) sets out a series of objectives that the NSTA must have regard to. Amongst other things, these include:

- The need to minimise public expenditure relating to, or arising from, relevant activities.
- The need for the United Kingdom to have a secure supply of energy.
- The need to maintain a stable and predictable system of regulation which encourages investment in relevant activities.

Additionally, in 2022, the government introduced the 'climate compatibility checkpoint'.² The purpose of this is to ensure that "the compatibility of future licensing with the UK's climate objectives is evaluated" before new oil and gas licensing rounds are offered. The checkpoint

¹ North Sea Transition Authority, '[Licensing rounds](#)', accessed 26 February 2024.

² Department for Energy Security and Net Zero and Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, '[Climate compatibility checkpoint design](#)', 22 September 2022.



does not have a legislative basis, but is an exercise designed to inform ministers on whether to endorse the NSTA in launching a new licensing round.³

1.2 The bill

The bill would place the NSTA “under a new duty to run an annual process inviting applications for new offshore production licences”.⁴ This obligation would only apply if two tests are met. Firstly, the carbon intensity of domestic natural gas must be lower than the carbon intensity of imported liquefied natural gas (LNG). Secondly, the UK must be projected to remain a net importer of both oil and gas.

Beyond introducing this conditional requirement, the government says the bill is not intended to have any other impact on the existing licensing process.⁵

1.3 Rationale

When introducing the bill as part of the King’s Speech, the government argued it would “strengthen the United Kingdom’s energy security and reduce reliance on volatile international energy markets and hostile foreign regimes”.⁶ It suggested that the introduction of regular licensing rounds would “[increase] investor and industry confidence” and “reduce dependence on higher emission imports from overseas”. In addition, the government said the bill would protect the domestic oil and gas industry, which supports more than 200,000 jobs, helping the UK “realise our net zero target in a pragmatic, proportionate and realistic way”.

The explanatory notes for the bill state that the purpose of obligating the NSTA to run annual licensing rounds is to “provide greater certainty to the industry and potential investors that licensing of the UK’s offshore petroleum resources will continue”.⁷

³ Department for Energy Security and Net Zero and Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, ‘[Climate compatibility checkpoint design](#)’, 22 September 2022, p 8.

⁴ [Explanatory notes](#), p 2.

⁵ [Explanatory notes](#), p 3.

⁶ Prime Minister’s Office, ‘[The King’s Speech 2023: Background briefing notes](#)’, 7 November 2023.

⁷ [Explanatory notes](#), p 2.



2. Provisions of the bill

The power to issue licences for offshore petroleum production is provided to the NSTA by the [1998 Petroleum Act](#). The bill, which has two clauses, would amend this act to introduce a requirement for annual licensing rounds. **Clause 1** would insert, after section 4 of the 1998 act ('Licences: further provisions'), the following three sections:

- 4ZA: Duty to invite applications for seaward area production licences
- 4ZB: The carbon intensity test
- 4ZC: The net importer test

4ZA says that, if tests outlined in 4ZB and 4ZC are met for a “relevant year”, the Oil and Gas Authority (which now operates as the NSTA) must “publish an application notice inviting applications for a seaward area production licence in respect of at least one block”. The “relevant year” is taken to mean the “the period of 12 months beginning with 1 October 2024 and each subsequent period of 12 months”.

4ZB outlines the ‘carbon intensity test’ that must be met for requirement outlined in 4ZA to apply. It says that the test would be met for a relevant year if the “carbon intensity of domestic natural gas produced during the assessment period is lower than the carbon intensity of LNG imported into the United Kingdom during that period”. Carbon intensity is defined as the carbon dioxide emissions attributable to production, per barrel of oil equivalent of natural gas.⁸ The assessment period referred to is the three calendar years preceding the calendar year in which the relevant year begins.

4ZC outlines the ‘net importer test’ that must be met for the requirement outlined in 4ZA to apply. It says that the test would be met for a relevant year if:

- the amount of domestic natural gas produced during each calendar year of the assessment period is expected to be less than the demand for natural gas in the United Kingdom during that calendar year, and
- the amount of domestic crude oil and domestic natural gas liquids produced during each calendar year of the assessment period is expected to be less than

⁸ The secretary of state would be given the power to amend this definition, by regulations made by statutory instrument, to include emissions of gases other than carbon dioxide.



the demand for petroleum products in the United Kingdom during that calendar year.

The assessment period is designated as the 15 calendar years following the calendar year in which the relevant year ends. The amount of any substance produced and demand for any substance are to be “assessed on the basis of its energy-equivalence”.

The NSTA would be responsible for carrying out both tests mentioned above.⁹

Clause 2 contains miscellaneous provisions. It states that the bill would extend to England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, and would come into force two months after it is passed.

3. Consideration of the bill in the House of Commons

3.1 Second reading

The second reading of the bill took place on 22 January 2024.¹⁰

The secretary of state for energy security and net zero, Claire Coutinho, opened the second reading debate by praising the UK’s progress towards reducing carbon emissions and suggesting that the UK had “some of the most ambitious climate change targets of any major world economy”.¹¹ However, she stated that the UK will still need oil and gas over the next few decades and that “even the Climate Change Committee’s own data shows that when we reach net zero in 2050, we will still be using oil and gas for a significant portion of our energy”.¹² Following this, she said:

We know that we are going to need oil and gas—where do we want it to come from? Only an ideologue would argue that we are better off importing dirtier fuels from abroad than using what we can produce at home. However, it is not just energy

⁹ [Explanatory notes](#), p 7.

¹⁰ [HC Hansard, 22 January 2024, cols 41–117](#).

¹¹ [HC Hansard, 22 January 2024, col 41](#).

¹² [HC Hansard, 22 January 2024, col 41](#).



security that dictates that we should use our own resources; the economic case also shows that introducing annual licensing is the right thing to do.¹³

The secretary of state said that the “gas that we bring in from abroad in the form of LNG has emissions four times higher” and that domestic oil and gas production “adds about £16bn to the UK economy annually and brings in tens of billions of pounds in tax revenue”.¹⁴ She said that “perhaps the most important reason” to back the bill was that the oil and gas sector supports 200,000 jobs.¹⁵ She suggested that “it is the same people who are working on oil and gas rigs today who we will need on the offshore wind farms of tomorrow” and that the UK risks losing those workers and their skills if the oil and gas sector declines too quickly.¹⁶

The shadow secretary of state for climate change and net zero, Edward Miliband, indicated Labour’s opposition to the bill, and moved an amendment for the bill’s second reading to be rejected. The wording of the amendment read:

This House, while affirming the need for urgent action to tackle the UK’s energy insecurity, the cost of living crisis, and the climate crisis, and for a managed, fair and prosperous transition for workers and communities, declines to give a second reading to the Offshore Petroleum Licensing Bill because mandating annual oil and gas licensing rounds will not reduce energy costs for households and businesses as the secretary of state for energy security and net zero has stated, will not enhance energy security, offers no plan for the future of the UK’s offshore energy communities, will ensure the UK remains at the mercy of petrostates and dictators who control fossil fuel markets, is entirely incompatible with the UK’s international climate change commitments and is a totally unnecessary piece of legislation which will do nothing to serve the UK’s national interest.¹⁷

The shadow secretary of state said “we face massive challenges as a country, but it is not the scale of our problems that is so apparent today, but the smallness of the government’s response”.¹⁸ He argued that the bill would not make any difference to the UK’s energy security and would not reduce bills, because oil and gas is traded on international markets.¹⁹ He said that the tax revenues which flow from the industry do not justify the policy, given

¹³ [HC Hansard, 22 January 2024, col 42.](#)

¹⁴ [HC Hansard, 22 January 2024, col 42.](#)

¹⁵ [HC Hansard, 22 January 2024, col 42.](#)

¹⁶ [HC Hansard, 22 January 2024, col 43.](#)

¹⁷ [HC Hansard, 22 January 2024, col 46.](#)

¹⁸ [HC Hansard, 22 January 2024, col 47.](#)

¹⁹ [HC Hansard, 22 January 2024, col 47.](#)



that “it is our reliance on fossil fuels that has caused rocketing energy bills” and forced the government to step in to provide around £100bn of financial support to households and businesses.²⁰ He argued that new licences would not protect workers in the industry and that a proper plan was needed to help those workers transition to jobs in “the industries of the future: offshore wind, carbon capture and hydrogen”.²¹

Additionally, Mr Miliband suggested that the government’s policy of “maxing out” the North Sea was incompatible with the agreement recently made at COP28 (the 2023 UN climate change conference) to transition away from fossil fuels.²²

Sir Alok Sharma (Conservative MP for Reading West), who was president of COP26 (the 2021 UN climate change conference hosted in Glasgow), also cited the recent COP28 agreement. He said that he did not believe that the bill would advance the commitment to transition away from fossil fuels and that climate-vulnerable nations, which the government had said it was important to listen to during COP28, would think the bill inconsistent with that pledge.²³

He also said that the bill, as drafted, is “something of a distraction” and that the NSTA’s ability to grant new licences would not change materially as a result of it.²⁴ He said this was partly because the two tests have been “designed in such a way that the computer will always say yes to new oil and gas licences”, but also because the NSTA will remain free to grant licences outside the new annual duty in the usual way, whether or not the new tests are met.²⁵

Sir Alok also suggested that the bill would not reduce bills or improve energy security, given that the “the oil and gas extracted from the North Sea is owned by private enterprises and the government do not get to control to whom it is sold”. He argued that the best way to do so would be “for the government to continue to deliver on their ambitious plans for expanding home-grown clean energy”.²⁶

Dave Doogan, the SNP spokesperson for energy security and net zero, outlined his party’s

²⁰ [HC Hansard, 22 January 2024, cols 47–8.](#)

²¹ [HC Hansard, 22 January 2024, cols 48–9.](#)

²² [HC Hansard, 22 January 2024, col 49.](#)

²³ [HC Hansard, 22 January 2024, col 52.](#)

²⁴ [HC Hansard, 22 January 2024, col 52.](#)

²⁵ [HC Hansard, 22 January 2024, col 52.](#)

²⁶ [HC Hansard, 22 January 2024, col 52.](#)



opposition to the bill, arguing it would not improve the UK's energy security given the "combined effects of an international energy market and the vagaries of the UK's refining capacity, which is increasingly and substantially incompatible with oil extracted from the North Sea basin".²⁷ He suggested that the bill undermined the NSTA by obligating it to hold new licensing rounds every year, rather than as and when it deems them necessary, claiming that the two tests included in the bill were "Potemkin tests" that "will inevitably be met for each and every licence application in the future, should the bill pass".²⁸ He also argued that the bill would not reduce energy bills, stating:

The thing that is pushing up the price of household and commercial energy is not a lack of licensing but the price of gas on the international market that consumers are forced to pay not just for heating but for electricity, given the bizarre pricing structure and how the UK is set up to favour gas.²⁹

Mr Doogan said that what was required was a bold plan to "further accelerate the electrification from renewables of our domestic energy market", but that, in contrast, the bill presented "a backward-looking cash grab for Scotland's hydrocarbons, which comes at the cost of a just transition".³⁰

Wera Hobhouse, the Liberal Democrat spokesperson for energy and climate change, described the bill as an "outrage".³¹ She said that "new licences for new oil and gas fields in the North Sea are in direct conflict with our national and international net zero commitments" and that the country must instead move away from its dependence on fossil fuels.³² She claimed that the legislation "breaks down a decade-long cross-party consensus that every government must be seriously committed to cutting greenhouse gas emissions" and that "undermining this consensus is hugely irresponsible and sends entirely the wrong signals to the international community".³³ She argued that oil and gas were the energy sources of the past and that domestic renewable energy and a "significant home insulation programme" were the keys to securing the UK's future energy needs.³⁴

²⁷ [HC Hansard, 22 January 2024, col 54.](#)

²⁸ [HC Hansard, 22 January 2024, col 54.](#)

²⁹ [HC Hansard, 22 January 2024, col 55.](#)

³⁰ [HC Hansard, 22 January 2024, col 55.](#)

³¹ [HC Hansard, 22 January 2024, col 86.](#)

³² [HC Hansard, 22 January 2024, col 86.](#)

³³ [HC Hansard, 22 January 2024, col 86.](#)

³⁴ [HC Hansard, 22 January 2024, cols 87–8.](#)



The opposition's amendment to decline second reading was rejected by 209 to 292 votes and the bill passed its second reading by 293 to 211 votes.³⁵

3.2 Committee stage

A committee of the whole house took place on 20 February 2024.³⁶

Sir Alok Sharma introduced an amendment designed to “prevent the invitation of new seaward area production application licences until the secretary of state has introduced a ban on flaring and venting by new offshore installations”.³⁷ He suggested this was “an entirely reasonable ask” given that all it sought to do was “put into statute existing guidance on flaring and venting that was issued by the North Sea Transition Authority”.³⁸ He said that the ban on flaring in Norway is one of the key reasons why Norway had “become a leader in the cleaner production of oil and gas”, something the government had indicated it wanted from UK production.³⁹ Sir Alok said he hoped the government would introduce its own amendment similar to his when the bill reached the House of Lords, “given that it is consistent with government policy and guidance”. He suggested that if the government did not table its own amendment, someone else would do so and the House of Lords would be likely to support it.⁴⁰

Graham Stuart, minister of state at the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, responded that the government was already committed to ending routine flaring and venting by 2030 and that he feared Sir Alok's amendment would “risk replacing voluntary momentum with a slower, compliance-based, more resistant approach from industry”.⁴¹ However, he said he would continue to engage with Sir Alok on that policy as the bill moves to the House of Lords.⁴²

Sir Alok subsequently withdrew his amendment.⁴³

³⁵ [HC Hansard, 22 January 2024, cols 110–7.](#)

³⁶ [HC Hansard, 20 February 2024, cols 608–54.](#)

³⁷ [HC Hansard, 20 February 2024, col 608.](#)

³⁸ [HC Hansard, 20 February 2024, col 611.](#)

³⁹ [HC Hansard, 20 February 2024, col 612.](#)

⁴⁰ [HC Hansard, 20 February 2024, col 612.](#)

⁴¹ [HC Hansard, 20 February 2024, col 644.](#)

⁴² [HC Hansard, 20 February 2024, col 644.](#)

⁴³ [HC Hansard, 20 February 2024, col 647.](#)



Mr Doogan tabled a number of amendments, including two which were designed to introduce a “just transition test” into the bill.⁴⁴ This test would mean that the proposed requirement for annual licensing rounds would only apply if, in addition to meeting the other tests in the bill, the oil and gas sector was meeting certain greenhouse gas emission reduction targets and that geographical areas of the UK that are economically dependent on the sector were receiving funding to support the development of renewable energy. He argued that this amendment was necessary to prevent any government “from simply using Scotland’s North Sea oil and gas revenues to fund tax cuts in the UK”.⁴⁵

Mr Stuart opposed these amendments, arguing that the “skills, expertise and resources of the oil and gas industry” were needed to support the transition to cleaner technologies, and that it was important to maintain oil and gas jobs so that “they are not lost before renewables and other clean technologies grow to take up those skills”.⁴⁶

A vote was held on one of Mr Doogan’s proposed amendments and it was rejected by 44 to 285 votes.⁴⁷ The other was not called as a result.

Mr Miliband proposed similar amendments designed to introduce a “climate change test” into the bill.⁴⁸ This test would mean that the proposed requirement for annual licensing rounds would only apply if the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change working group on the mitigation of climate change found that the “granting of additional seaward area production licences is consistent with limiting warming to 1.5°C”. Alan Whitehead, shadow minister for climate change and net zero, said the amendments would “safeguard the legally binding commitments that the UK and all other nations made in the Paris agreement”.⁴⁹

Mr Stuart opposed these amendments too, arguing that “even with new licences, production is expected to decline faster than the average that is required globally to align with the UN’s 1.5°C pathways”.⁵⁰

⁴⁴ House of Commons, ‘[Offshore Petroleum Licensing Bill: Amendment paper](#)’, 20 February 2024.

⁴⁵ [HC Hansard, 20 February 2024, col 620.](#)

⁴⁶ [HC Hansard, 20 February 2024, col 646.](#)

⁴⁷ [HC Hansard, 20 February 2024, cols 648–50.](#)

⁴⁸ House of Commons, ‘[Offshore Petroleum Licensing Bill: Amendment paper](#)’, 20 February 2024.

⁴⁹ [HC Hansard, 20 February 2024, col 614.](#)

⁵⁰ [HC Hansard, 20 February 2024, col 645.](#)



A vote was held on one of these amendments and it was rejected by 226 to 287 votes.⁵¹ Again, the other amendment was not called as a result.

The bill completed committee stage without amendment.

3.3 Third reading

The third reading of the bill took place immediately after committee stage.⁵² As the bill was not amended in committee of the whole House, there was no report stage debate.

At third reading, Mr Stuart reaffirmed the government's position that the bill would provide certainty to the oil and gas sector, supporting investment and improving the UK's energy security.⁵³ The Labour Party and SNP reiterated their opposition to the bill, repeating their arguments that the bill would go against the UK's climate change commitments and would not improve the UK's energy security, given the way in which oil and gas is traded on international markets.⁵⁴

The bill passed its third reading by 286 to 221 votes.⁵⁵

4. Wider reaction to the bill

On 21 September 2023, the proposal to require annual licensing rounds was discussed at an NSTA board meeting. The published minutes of the meeting summarise the discussion as follows:

There was a general discussion, where the board expressed a unanimous view that such a proposal was not necessary for the NSTA to meet its functions under current legislation, including enabling the principal objective of maximising economic recovery of UK petroleum to be met. The board noted that the proposal would significantly

⁵¹ [HC Hansard, 20 February 2024, cols 651–4.](#)

⁵² [HC Hansard, 20 February 2024, cols 654–75.](#)

⁵³ [HC Hansard, 20 February 2024, cols 655–6.](#)

⁵⁴ [HC Hansard, 20 February 2025, cols 656–66.](#)

⁵⁵ [HC Hansard, 20 February 2024, cols 672–5.](#)



challenge one of the tenets of independence for the NSTA, to decide when to run a licensing round.

It was agreed that the chairman would seek a meeting with the secretary of state to explain the board's position but the board acknowledged that, while such a requirement was in its view not needed, the government can pass legislation as it considers appropriate.⁵⁶

On 7 November 2023, Offshore Energies UK, the trade association for UK offshore energy industries, expressed support for the bill. Responding to the bill's announcement in the King's Speech, CEO of Offshore Energies UK David Whitehouse said:

Our sector needs new licenses to manage the decline of oil and gas production in the North Sea. A predictable licensing process with transparent checks will support the highly skilled people working in the sector, while ensuring the granting of new licenses is compatible with energy security and net zero.⁵⁷

In contrast, the Green Alliance, an independent think tank and charity, challenged the idea that new oil and gas licences would increase energy security and support the transition to net zero. Heather Plumpton, senior policy analyst at the Green Alliance, said:

[...] more North Sea drilling will only pump more money into fossil fuel companies, who aren't investing in the transition to cleaner energy and aren't going to be taxed to help fund it. To drive down bills and increase the UK's energy security, we don't need new legislation aimed at political point scoring, we need to fulfil existing plans to insulate homes and make the most of abundant and cheap renewable energy.⁵⁸

The UK Energy Research Centre, an independent research centre, also criticised the bill. On 16 November 2023, it said that "offering oil and gas licences every year distracts from the challenge of winding down UK North Sea" and that the proposals "fly in the face" of

⁵⁶ North Sea Transition Authority, '[Minutes of NSTA Board meeting on 21st September 2023](#)', 23 November 2023.

⁵⁷ World Oil, '[OEUK: Offshore industry must churn new oil licenses to ensure domestic energy production](#)', 7 November 2023.

⁵⁸ Drill or Drop?, '[Reaction to oil and gas plans in King's Speech](#)', 7 November 2023.



recommendations by the Climate Change Committee.⁵⁹

The Climate Change Committee itself has not commented on the proposed legislation; however, in 2022, in response to a consultation about the proposed climate compatibility checkpoint, it said:

The CCC would support a tighter limit on production, with stringent tests and a presumption against exploration. An end to UK exploration would send a clear signal to investors and consumers that the UK is committed to the 1.5°C global temperature goal. That would also help the UK in its diplomatic efforts to strengthen climate ambition internationally.⁶⁰

On 5 January 2024, Chris Skidmore (then Conservative MP for Kingswood), a former energy minister, resigned as a member of Parliament in protest at the bill. In his resignation statement he said:

As the former energy minister who signed the UK's net zero commitment by 2050 into law, I cannot vote for a bill that clearly promotes the production of new oil and gas. While no one is denying that there is a role for existing oil and gas in the transition to net zero, the International Energy Agency, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Committee on Climate Change have all stated that there must be no new additional oil and gas production on top of what has already been committed, if we are to both reach net zero carbon dioxide emissions by 2050 and keep the chance of limiting temperature rises to 1.5 degrees.⁶¹

He argued that “expanding new oil and gas licences or opening new oil fields will only create stranded assets of the future” and that the bill “achieves nothing apart from to send a global signal that the UK is rowing ever further back from its climate commitments”. He also said that he could no longer “continue to support a government that is committed to a course of action that I know is wrong and will cause future harm”.

The chancellor of the exchequer, Jeremy Hunt, said he “profoundly disagreed” with the reasons Mr Skidmore gave for resigning, reiterating the government’s position that fossil

⁵⁹ UK Energy Research Centre, ‘[Offering oil and gas licences every year distracts from the challenge of winding down UK North Sea](#)’, 16 November 2023.

⁶⁰ Climate Change Committee, ‘[Letter: Climate compatibility of new oil and gas fields](#)’, 24 February 2024.

⁶¹ Chris Skidmore, ‘[Personal X account](#)’, 5 January 2024.



fuels will still be required even when the UK reaches net zero and that “domestic oil and gas is four times cleaner than imported oil and gas”.⁶²

The UK government’s argument that domestic gas is four times cleaner than imported gas has been challenged. Beth Walker, senior policy advisor at the independent climate change think tank E3G, has said that the figure—which is based on analysis published by the NSTA—“comes from comparing UK gas production to the very dirtiest kind of gas imported into the UK (LNG)”.⁶³ She said that the focus on LNG obscures the fact that Norwegian gas, which is two times cleaner than UK gas production, is the main source of UK gas imports.

5. Read more

- BBC Verify, [‘North Sea oil and gas claims fact-checked’](#), 23 January 2024
- House of Lords Library, [‘The 1.5-degree celsius global warming threshold: Could it be breached in 2024?’](#), 12 January 2024
- House of Commons Library, [‘Offshore Petroleum Licensing Bill 2023–24: Second reading’](#), 4 January 2024
- Drill or Drop?, [‘Reaction to oil and gas plans in King’s Speech’](#), 7 November 2023.

⁶² BBC News, [‘Resigning ex-minister Chris Skidmore wrong on climate, says Jeremy Hunt’](#), 6 January 2024.

⁶³ NSTA, [‘North Sea gas is almost four times cleaner than LNG imports’](#), 31 July 2023 and ENDS Report, [‘Will the Offshore Petroleum Licensing Bill improve energy security?’](#), 16 January 2024.

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