# Challenges and Divided Opinions in Aberdeen as North Sea Oil Industry Declines



The city of Aberdeen, located in the northeast of Scotland, is experiencing the impacts of the declining North Sea oil and gas industry. Chris Douglas, a long-time resident and taxi company owner, noted that his business's reliance on oil and gas has halved in recent years. The North Sea oil basin produced only 34 million tonnes of oil last year, its lowest output since the 1970s, as major companies withdraw.

This situation affects approximately 60,000 oil and gas workers, their families, and communities, posing significant economic challenges. Joe Rollin from the union Unite emphasized the need for a fair transition to low-carbon jobs. The political landscape ahead of this week’s election reveals divided opinions on managing the decline. UK's Conservative Party supports new oil exploration licenses, while Labour promises to cease new licenses and ensure no job losses during the transition. The Scottish National Party seeks a middle ground by approving licenses under strict climate conditions.

The decline of North Sea oil and gas has already reduced job numbers from 441,000 to 214,000 in the past decade. Labour proposes creating jobs in renewables, carbon capture, and hydrogen, promising to establish Great British Energy in Scotland to aid the transition. However, there are concerns about the adequacy of their plans and funding.

Trade unions and climate groups are increasingly calling for a detailed and well-funded transition plan that prioritizes workers and communities. Analysts warn that mishandling the transition could severely impact the Scottish economy, especially considering that clean energy jobs typically offer lower wages than oil and gas sector jobs.

The urgent need for a just transition is highlighted by the potential socioeconomic impacts on regions dependent on the oil and gas industry, echoing past industrial declines such as the coal sector in the 1980s.

In summary, Aberdeen and the broader region are at a critical juncture as political, economic, and environmental factors converge, demanding cohesive and effective strategies to ensure a smooth and equitable transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy.