



STUC Energy Conference 2023

The STUC's Energy Conference in March 2023 brought together trade unionists, policymakers, and relevant stakeholders to consider how to tackle bills, climate and jobs crises by ensuring a just transition and building trade union power.

The second panel titled, 'Our demands – building a new energy system' brought together expert speakers focused on the policies necessary to tackle the systemic causes of an energy system that drives the climate crisis, oversees soaring energy bills, and fails to retain jobs and economic benefits in communities. The session outlined the structural changes necessary to rebuild our energy system and set out what decision-makers at all levels could do to get this underway.

Participants then broke into breakout groups and focused on reflections from the panel and developed ideas for how to fix the energy system, directed primarily at decision makers. Later breakouts would focus on what organising within the trade union movement and communities could look like.

Condensed notes from the second panel's breakout groups are below.

Breakout 2: Our demands – building a new energy system

Reflections on the second panel:

- The energy system:
 - o The energy industry isn't being regulated properly, we need to focus on public ownership *and* changing regulation. If we create publicly owned energy companies within the current framework, many problems will remain the same.

- How do we push the Global Wind Organisation to agree to an offshore training passport? Where do we go from here if they will not agree?
- We need to show a plan for delivery of publicly owned energy
- Apprenticeships and training are needed to have competency for new industries, the fair work committee is currently failing
- Wealth distribution:
 - Not enough public outcry from the Scottish public about creating wealth within Scotland
 - For a long time, the distribution of wealth has only gone in one direction
- Conditionality:
 - We should be mandating sectoral bargaining through any leases, licenses or contracts
 - We need to be leveraging legislation, public procurement and licensing conditions
- Opportunities and investment:
 - There is a huge opportunity for job creation if we meet targets, it doesn't need to be a narrative of job loss in the transition
 - Need to have widespread insulation and retrofitting schemes
 - Need to see action by the government for people to believe change is possible

Developing demands for a future energy system

- Democracy:
 - Companies have disproportionate power and influence with government
 - Scottish Government needs to develop specialised skills in civil service to deliver the energy transition in-house
 - It's not as simple as knowing what the problems are, it's about power and who holds it
 - We need transparency around lobbying in government, education about the private market and a public campaign on how the energy system works
 - Changing regulation of the energy industry
- Public ownership:
 - Increased public procurement in Scotland
 - Important to look at a diversity of publicly owned options – ex. Nationally owned companies and municipal and community owned energy
 - Private utilities are costing us, it is time to end the idea that the market is more efficient
- Investment:
 - Rent controls should be tied to retrofitting and housing stock quality
 - Long term planning needed: refinancing by government and a corresponding timeline
 - Need a just transition fund going directly to workers, regardless of their employment status or employer
 - Increase and utilise the Scottish National Investment Bank

- Jobs and unions:
 - More money in transition and skills training
 - Mandating sectoral collective bargaining agreements
 - Developing jobs for retrofitting and decarbonising shipping
 - Need investment in current workforce with new technology and skills, as well as investing in apprenticeships
 - Identifying power of workers – partially political action and partially pro-active industrial action
 - Keeping people engaged in organising during crisis: believing in trade unions and their power
 - Recognition and implementation of the offshore training passport for workers in the offshore industry
 - Universal jobs guarantee as a potential strategy
 - Highlight the different terms and conditions for migrant workers in offshore energy industries