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News Release

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UK oil and gas reserves may last only a decade, study suggests

The Scottish and UK oil industries are entering their final decade of production, research suggests.

A study of output from offshore fields estimates that close to 10 per cent of the UK's original recoverable oil and gas remains – about 11 per cent of oil and nine per cent of gas resources.

The analysis also finds that fracking will be barely economically feasible in the UK, especially in Scotland, because of a lack of sites with suitable geology.

If the study's predictions are correct, the UK will soon have to import all the oil and gas it needs, researchers warn.

Instead, they recommend a move towards greater use of renewable energy sources, particularly offshore wind and advanced solar energy technologies.

It is strongly urged that the UK Government's ongoing energy cost report – the high-profile Helm Review – should take stock of the projected shortfall in resource availability and how this might be addressed.

Scientists from the University of Edinburgh examined the UK's likely potential for fracking and carried out a fresh analysis of the country's oil and gas production.

Their findings take into account the long-term downward trends of oil and gas field size and lifespan, alongside the break-even costs for fracking.

They found that the UK has only minimal potential for fracking. Many possible sites are in densely populated areas, have low quality source rocks and complex geological histories.

Fracking is likely to be too restricted to become an effective industry, which would require thousands of wells, scientists say.

Analysis of hydrocarbon reserves shows that discoveries have consistently lagged behind output since the point of peak oil recovery in the late 1990s. The research predicts that both oil and gas reserves will run out within a decade.

The study, in *The Edinburgh Geologist*, is published by the Edinburgh Geological Society.

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Professor Roy Thompson, of the University of Edinburgh's School of GeoSciences, who led the study, said: "The UK urgently needs a bold energy transition plan, instead of trusting to dwindling fossil fuel reserves and possible fracking.

"We must act now and drive the necessary shift to a clean economy with integration between energy systems. There needs to be greater emphasis on renewables, energy storage and improved insulation and energy efficiencies."

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