UK MAJOR PORTS GROUP

Major Ports Manifesto: Scottish Parliament Elections 2026

ABP ASSOCIATED BRITISH PORTS

FORTH PORTS LIMITED

PEEL PORTS GROUP

Section 1: Setting Out the Stall

Scotland's Ports: Driving Growth, Clean Energy and Resilience

Scotland stands at a pivotal moment in its energy and economic journey. As traditional energy assets such as refineries and nuclear facilities are decommissioned, the nation faces a clear choice: replace them with sustainable, resilient alternatives or risk falling behind in the global race for clean growth.

Scotland's ports are the foundation of this transformation. They are not just gateways for trade; they are strategic hubs powering the energy transition, enabling innovation and connecting industries to the resources they need to thrive.

This transition covers more than offshore wind. It is about creating a diverse, homegrown energy mix that includes hydrogen, carbon capture, long-duration storage and low-carbon fuels. It is about building the infrastructure and supply chains that will make Scotland a self-sufficient energy superpower and a global leader in the green economy. Ports are uniquely positioned to deliver this vision because they combine deep-water access, multimodal connectivity and skilled workforces with the capacity to attract large-scale investment.

The stakes are high. Scotland's ports already deliver exceptional value to the economy, with productivity 50% higher than the UK average and pay 40% higher. They support thousands of high-quality jobs and catalyse inward investment through major infrastructure projects, strengthened by incentives such as the Inverness and Cromarty Firth Green Freeport, Forth Green Freeport and Glasgow City Region Investment Zone.

With the right policy framework, ports can accelerate clean energy deployment, strengthen supply chains and unlock growth across Scotland's maritime communities.

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Section 2: Scotland's Ports in Driving Growth, Clean Energy and Resilience

Associated British Ports (ABP), Forth Ports and Peel Ports are central to Scotland's trading position and energy transition. They support growth in onshore and offshore renewables, support Ministry of Defence activity and enable the shift to a low-carbon economy. They also catalyse inward investment through major infrastructure projects and partnerships with global innovators.

FORTH PORTS LIMITED

Forth Ports Group operates Scotland's largest port group across key east coast sites, including Grangemouth, Leith, Rosyth, Burntisland and Dundee. The group is investing £350 million in renewable terminals, mixed-use developments, multi-modal transport and fleet expansion through Targe Towage.

Grangemouth anchors the petrochemicals cluster; Leith is Scotland's largest offshore renewables hub; Dundee is the port-of-choice for offshore wind assembly; and Rosyth is the premier agri-distribution hub.

ABP | ASSOCIATED BRITISH PORTS

ABP owns and operates 21 ports around the UK, including the Scottish ports of Ayr and Troon. We are committed to Scotland for the long term, providing gateways for trade, enabling green energy infrastructure and creating the conditions for local jobs and prosperity.

Strategically located on the west coast, Ayr and Troon play a vital role in Scotland's economy. They enable the TimberLINK service, supporting the shipping of around 125,000 tonnes of timber annually, reducing road congestion and carbon emissions. Both ports also handle agribulk imports, supporting the farming community in south-west Scotland.

Through Troon, we're proud to be improving the resilience of the lifeline ferry service to Arran for locals and visitors alike, while Ayr plays a crucial role in the Scottish onshore wind sector, having clocked up the import of 2,500 turbine components.

Further north, ABP's Cromarty Firth Energy Park (CFEP), offers a 150-acre development site, which provides flexible space for clean energy, energy storage and logistics activities. We're a proven investor in our ports and committed to working in partnership with the Scottish Government to deliver prosperity for all.

Peel Ports Group operates a portfolio on the west coast, most notably Greenock Ocean Terminal and King George V Dock, handling containers, project cargo, agri-bulks, forest products, cruise traffic and offshore logistics, while also investing heavily in renewables. KGV Dock manages thousands of wind turbine components annually, while the £150 million Hunterston PARC redevelopment is creating a strategic energy and marine campus of national importance. Hunterston is being transformed from a former coal facility into a hub for innovation in hydrogen, energy storage and low-carbon fuels, replacing legacy assets and supporting Scotland's and the UK's transition to net zero.

Operating critical national infrastructure across the Forth and Clyde estuaries, all three operators are delivery nodes for Scotland's Green Industrial Strategy and the UK's Industrial and Defence Investment Strategies, underpinned by long-standing partnerships with Babcock International and BAE Systems.

"KGV Dock manages thousands of wind turbine components annually."

Section 3: Port priorities for the new Scottish Government

With Holyrood elections next year, our operations have united behind a vision of what Scotland needs from the next administration to secure sustainable growth amid rising domestic and international competition.

At a minimum, Scotland must be working on a level playing field with the rest of the UK on procurement standards, the Apprenticeship Levy, planning, cruise taxation and Income Tax. Keeping rules predictable and aligned in design and timing will mean investors view the UK as a single, competitive market. This will help ports grow trade, speed up clean energy deployment and deliver sustainable growth.

"The emerging Defence Growth Deal Deal, backed by £250 million investment, should be leveraged to support port expansion."

Policy Priorities

1. Scotland's Defence Growth Deal

Strengthen defence-port partnerships to unlock manufacturing growth, strategic storage and advanced skills capacity.

The emerging Deal, backed by £250 million investment, should be leveraged to support port expansion by aligning shipbuilding, naval logistics and dual-use maritime infrastructure. Defence-related investment can strengthen supply chains and drive growth in hubs such as Rosyth and Faslane, where defence and commercial activity intersect.

2. Planning Improvements

Deliver a streamlined, responsive marine consenting system, potentially through a unified approach similar to development consent orders.

Target growth sectors, particularly in the low-carbon economy, will require significant port infrastructure. Floating offshore wind (FLOW) and carbon capture, usage, and storage (CCUS) need new jetties, heavy-lift quays and wet storage for FLOW structures. England is reforming regulation to improve responsiveness. Scotland must match this ambition with clearer, faster marine consenting.

3. Freight Incentives Reform

Modernise freight incentives to prioritise maritime links, the lowest-carbon mode of mass transport, cutting road miles and easing congestion.

Current incentives favour road and, to some extent, rail over maritime, limiting growth in the most carbon-efficient mode of mass transport. With the right policies, 50,000 freight units could shift from road, reducing congestion and wear while improving global connectivity.

Section 4: In Focus - Port Stories

Hunterston PARC: From Coal to Clean Energy

Hunterston PARC is being transformed from a former coal facility into a strategic energy and marine campus of national importance, supporting Scotland's and the UK's transition to net zero. Backed by £150 million of investment, the site is becoming a hub for hydrogen production, energy storage and low-carbon innovation. Peel Ports has partnered with Statkraft to explore green hydrogen production and export, and with Highview Power to deliver a long-duration energy storage facility providing 3.2 GWh of capacity, enough to power around 650,000 homes for over 12 hours. These projects are turning brownfield land into a green growth engine that strengthens grid stability and accelerates Scotland's clean energy future.

ABP Ayr and Troon: Powering Onshore Wind and Rural Resilience

ABP is undergoing a strategic transformation from being primarily a gateway for goods to becoming a major enabler of green energy infrastructure, including onshore and offshore wind, hydrogen and carbon capture. The Port of Ayr is well placed to support Scotland's onshore wind industry. Over the past decade, it has facilitated the construction of projects for a variety of developers, often handling the import of all turbine components. Its proximity to project sites and the main road network reduces haulage distances, fuel costs and associated emissions, enabling more sustainable project delivery.

Forth Ports: Building Scotland's Offshore Wind Corridor

Forth Ports is transforming its ports into hubs for renewable energy, low-carbon logistics and net zero infrastructure. Over £150 million of private investment has created bespoke offshore wind hubs at Dundee and Leith, supporting specialist landside and marine teams to advance Scotland's growing green economy. Forth Ports offers over 1 million square metres of offshore wind marshalling capacity across Leith, Dundee, Rosyth and Burntisland, with plans to create a manufacturing corridor between north Edinburgh and Fife. Forth Projects, the group's engineering-led offshore wind delivery arm, provides end-to-end support with heavy lift and transport capabilities, including the UK's largest fleet of self-propelled modular transporters. Sustainability initiatives are advancing Scotland's net zero transition, including Targe Towage's ongoing green hydrogen shore power project at Leith.

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