



EXCLUSIVE

Leading campaigner says Scottish nuclear ban 'absolutely right'

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First Minister John Swinney speaking at the opening of the Techscaler hub at Water's Edge, Dundee, on March 5 (Image: PA)



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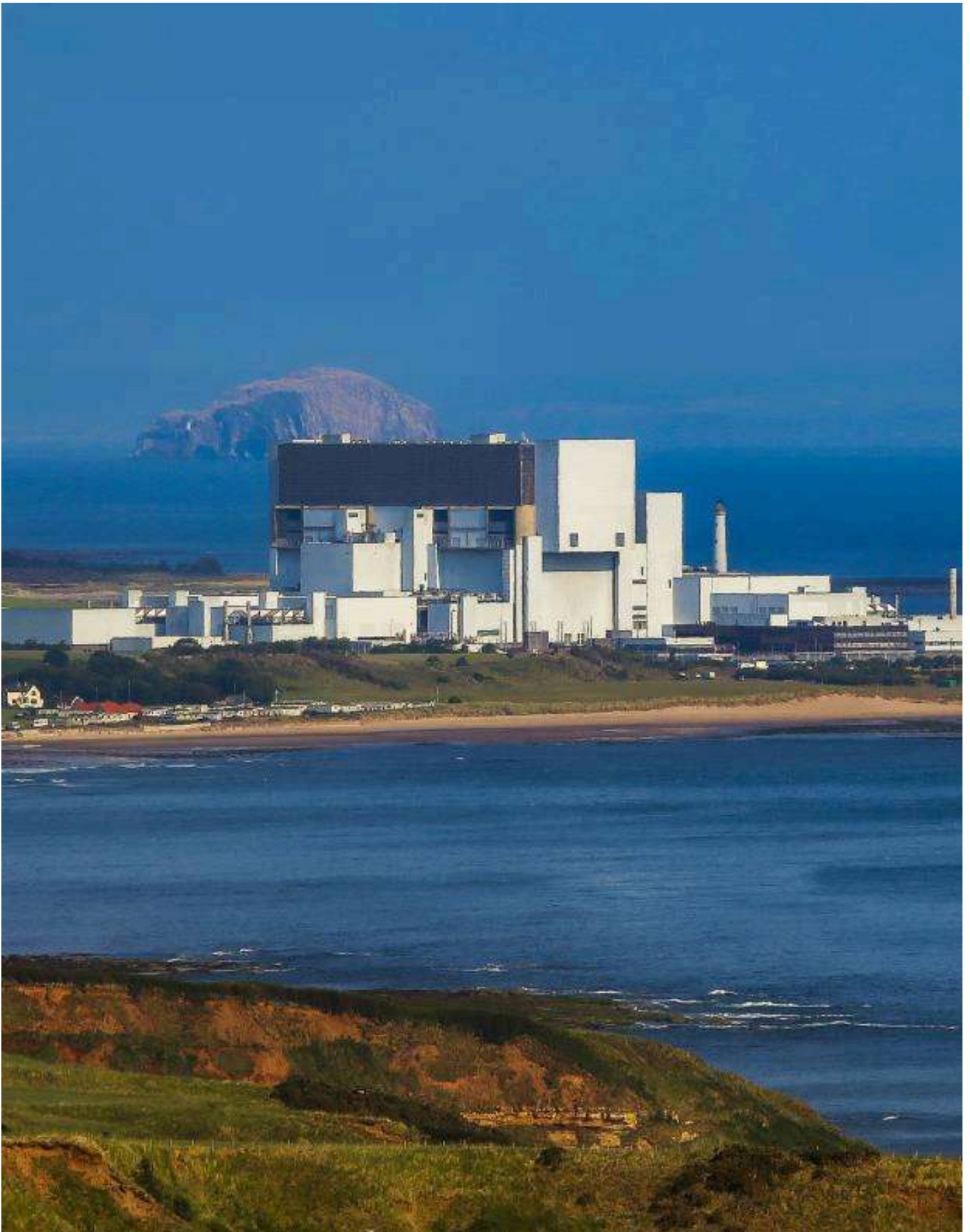
SCOTLAND has it “absolutely right” on nuclear power, according to the author of a new book against the energy source.

Linda Pentz Gunter, a veteran campaigner against nuclear energy, urged First Minister **John Swinney** to stand firm in the **face of “bullying” from Westminster to reverse Scotland’s de facto ban.**

Her new book, *No To Nuclear*, refreshes the case against atomic power as renewable energy becomes cheaper to harness while pro-nuclear lobbying intensifies.

She told the Sunday National: “Scotland has it absolutely right. You don’t need to take the risk, the waste, the expense of nuclear power. It’s intricately connected to the nuclear weapons sector.”

Pentz Gunter, who is the founder of the American campaign group Beyond Nuclear, added: “The real hope, if independence were to happen, is that you could get these things out of the country, as you should, because there’s no reason for Scotland to be taking those kinds of risks and being a target with the Faslane base and having a nuclear power plant that could render vast areas of the country uninhabitable for the foreseeable future.”



Torness Nuclear Power Station in East Lothian

Asked if she had a message for Swinney, who faces repeated calls from the Nuclear Industry Association and the **UK Government** to abandon his opposition to atomic power, she said: “Why would you do the most expensive, slowest way of generating electricity? Why would you choose the most expensive, slowest way when you have

ample opportunity to do it faster and cheaper? You're going to reduce more carbon faster with renewables for the same amount of investment as you would for nuclear power.”

She added: “There’s just no reason to be bullied that way by **Westminster**. It’s just another example I think of the Westminster government preying on the further-flung places in the United Kingdom.”

Pentz Gunter has worked to promote anti-nuclear campaigns since the late 1990s and believes that the industry is now struggling for relevance, given its **enormous costs** compared with the insurgent renewables sector.

This can be seen, she argued, in the “saturation propaganda campaign to convince taxpayers that they want to waste their money on these great big, white elephants”.

“The reason that Scotland is such a great example – and hopefully you’ll hold the line – is that popular resistance and opposition is what’ll change things,” she added.

Pentz Gunter pointed to the example of the **anti-uranium mining protests in Orkney in the late 1970s**.

“There was this fantastic uprising that stopped the mining there. **Orkney** has become a sort of renewable energy Mecca,” she said. “It’s a good template.



File photograph from 1996 of Aea Nuclear Reprocessing Plant at Dounreay

“If you stand up and say, ‘No, we don’t want our landscape desecrated and contaminated with radioactive waste, we’d rather do these things’, it can work.”

There has also been a notable shift in the nuclear energy industry’s stance on the issue of nuclear weapons, Pentz Gunter added.

“The nuclear power industry for years tried to separate itself from the nuclear weapons sector because it didn’t want to be associated with the atomic bomb,” she said.

“And now they can’t wait to tell you how essential they are to keep the nuclear weapons industry going because we bought so fully into the myth of deterrence, that we’re all much safer if we have nuclear weapons.

“So if you want to make sure that the nuclear weapons are up to date and reliable, you’ve got to keep feeding them personnel, know-how, technology into that sector from the civil sector, so it’s absolutely important that we keep the civil sector going. This is a false narrative, but it works very well to convince people that we should want it.”

No To Nuclear: Why Nuclear Power Destroys Lives, Derails Climate Progress And Provokes War by Linda Pentz Gunter **is published by Pluto Press.**

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