

Shell wins appeal in landmark emissions case

Shell has won its appeal against a climate court ruling that it must sharply reduce its carbon emissions.

The oil and gas producer went to the Court of Appeal in the Netherlands following a decision in support of environmental campaign groups in the country, including Friends Of The Earth.

That [ruling](#), in 2021, ordered [Shell](#) to cut its carbon emissions by 45% by 2030 compared to 2019 levels in order to protect Dutch citizens.

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The emissions curbs included those caused by the use of Shell's products.

The judge in the appeal dismissed all the claims against Shell.

The company, which exited its dual headquarters structure in The Hague in 2022 to reside only in the UK, had argued that the original district court decision was flawed on many grounds.

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They included that only nation states can set such sweeping demands and that such a cut to its business would only shift output towards its competitors without any benefit to the planet.

The ruling was handed down as the COP29 climate summit is staged in Azerbaijan and just months after Shell weakened a 2030 carbon reduction target and scrapped a 2035 objective, citing expectations for strong gas demand and uncertainty in the energy transition.

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Tuesday’s judgment may not be the end of the matter.

The [climate](#) groups, which saw the case as a human rights issue, have the option to bring their own appeal to the Netherlands’ Supreme Court.

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The only boost to their legal fight came from the court agreeing with the activists that Shell had an obligation to cut its greenhouse gas emissions to protect people from global warming.

The appeal court, in its findings, added however that the company was on its way to meet required targets for its own emissions though it was unclear if demands on it to reduce emissions caused by the use of its products would help the fight against climate change.

Shell chief executive, Wael Sawan, responded: "We are pleased with the court's decision, which we believe is the right one for the global energy transition, the Netherlands and our company.

"Our target to become a net-zero emissions energy business by 2050 remains at the heart of Shell's strategy and is transforming our business. This includes continuing our work to halve emissions from our operations by 2030.

“We are making good progress in our strategy to deliver more value with less emissions.”

Friends Of The Earth director in the Netherlands Donald Pols said of the ruling: “This hurts.

“At the same time, we see that this case has ensured that major polluters are not immune and has further stimulated the debate about their responsibility in combating dangerous climate change.

“That is why we continue to tackle major polluters, such as Shell.”