



Shell wins carbon appeal

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Body

Shell has won its appeal against a 2021 landmark decision that said it was partially responsible for climate change and must sharply cut its carbon emissions, delivering a major court victory to the **oil** giant in a closely watched case.

The ruling in a Dutch court is a setback for efforts by non-profits and other groups to hold energy companies and other multinationals responsible for the effects of climate change.

But experts warned the issues raised in the case remain far from settled. They said the judgment signalled a willingness by the court to mandate emissions curbs, while leaving wide latitude for the mechanisms to be worked out in future litigation.

The 2021 decision by The Hague district court ordered **Shell** - at the time based in the Netherlands - to reduce its carbon emissions by 45 per cent by the end of 2030 from 2019 levels.

The Hague Court of Appeal on Tuesday ruled that while **Shell** is obliged to reduce its emissions, the court was unable to determine which percentage should apply.

"There is insufficient consensus in climate science on a specific reduction percentage to which an individual company like **Shell** should adhere," it said.

It said it therefore rejected the claims of Milieudefensie, the Dutch arm of environmental group Friends of the Earth.

The court added that **Shell** was already working to reduce its emissions and that an obligation for the company to reduce emissions caused by buyers of its products would be ineffective.

Milieudefensie called the appeals court decision a shocking setback, but said that it showed companies were under pressure to reduce carbon emissions, even if targets aren't legally binding. "Large polluters are powerful. But united, we as people have the power to change them," said Donald Pols, its director.

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The group didn't say whether it planned an appeal to the Dutch supreme court, a process that could extend the legal fight for years. Lawyers expect the group to appeal.

Its statement included a plea for financial support, adding, "This judgment will change nothing about our eagerness to keep fighting." The decision comes as world leaders meet in the Azerbaijan capital of Baku to discuss global warming at the United Nations COP29 summit. The mood in many circles has been gloomy in part due to expectations that Donald Trump's victory will pull the US further back from a leading role in global climate efforts.

In a response to the Dutch court's ruling, **Shell** reiterated that it believed a court ruling would do little to reduce emissions as it wouldn't dent demand for **petrol**, diesel and **gas**. The clear view in Tuesday's judgment is that the court felt empowered to order a company to abide by absolute carbon emissions targets, a novel development that could have wide ripple effects even while specifics are debated in different countries and courtrooms.

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