

# Dutch lawmakers approve plan to close coal power plants

November 26 2015

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The Dutch parliament, photographed March 10, 2015, has passed a measure that would phase out coal-fired power plants in The Netherlands; the plan will now go to the cabinet for review

Dutch lawmakers voted in favour Thursday of phasing out coal power plants in the Netherlands, appealing to other countries to do the same, days ahead of a crunch UN climate summit.

The motion, proposed a week ago by two members of the progressive D66 party, was adopted by a small majority in the 150-seat lower house.

Those in favour included the Labour Party, junior partner in the ruling

coalition of Liberal Prime Minister Mark Rutte, whose own party is vehemently opposed to the plans.

"The Netherlands is giving an important signal on the eve of the UN [climate summit](#) in Paris," said D66 parliamentarian Stientje van Veldhoven, one of the motion's drafters.

"We're stopping with [coal power](#) plants and I hope our [prime minister](#) will also convince other countries to take similar steps," Van Veldhoven added.

"The closure of coal power plants can be technically and financially achieved, it is good for the climate as well as the air quality in our country," said Marianne Thieme, another lawmaker who supported the motion.

Thursday's adoption follows in the wake of a letter written by 64 leading Dutch academics calling for the closure of all 11 coal power stations in the Netherlands by as early as 2020.

The academics—all environmental and sustainability specialists—argue that the electricity needs of the country's 17 million people can easily be met by using "cleaner" gas-burning power plants.



Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte, photographed November 20, 2015 in The Hague, is on record as opposing a plan approved by lawmakers November 26 that would phase out his nation's coal-fired power plants

The motion now has to go to the Dutch cabinet for discussion.

But Rutte has opposed the proposal, saying it would lead to electricity imports from so-called "brown coal" power plants, which produce more harmful emissions than black coal power plants.

"These power plants are not nearly as super modern as three of the newest coal [power plants](#) in the Netherlands," Rutte told parliament on Wednesday.

The Dutch government is currently also appealing a landmark ruling in favour of environmentalists which has ordered it to slash greenhouse gases by a quarter by 2020.

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