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John Hutton at ASI conference [1]

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The UK government wants to ensure that all new fossil fuel plants are prepared for carbon capture. The plan was announced by business secretary John Hutton (pictured) at a packed Adam Smith Institute conference on *The Future of Utilities* this week. Much to the dismay of the enviro-lobbyists present, Hutton also confirmed that the government was sticking with its plans to boost clean coal technology.

"Fossil fuels will continue to play an important role in ensuring the flexibility of the electricity generation system," Hutton told us. "Electricity demand fluctuates continually, but the fluctuations can be very pronounced during winter, requiring rapid short-term increases in production. Neither wind nor nuclear can fulfil this role. We therefore will continue to need this back up from fossil fuels, with coal a key source of that flexibility,"

Ah well, the penny seems to have dropped there, at least. And it continues: the government has already declared its support for new nuclear power to replace (or even expand) the 20 percent or so of electricity generation that currently comes from Britain's elderly reactors. Which makes sense, given that the government is trying to balance the need for secure energy with its commitment to cut carbon dioxide emissions (by 60 percent from 1990 levels, by 2050).

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