



The Rt Hon Greg Clark MP
Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
1 Victoria Street
London, SW1H 0ET

19th October 2017

Dear Secretary of State,

The UK government's position on hydraulic fracturing

We are writing to you today to outline our growing concerns over the potential development of hydraulic fracturing for gas in England.

The Scottish Government decision to ban fracking, following a two year consultation process, leaves the Westminster government and England isolated as the only part of the UK with a policy in favour of this controversial technology. The recent publication of the Clean Growth Strategy and associated documents has confirmed that shale gas is not needed to ensure a security of supply, and contained no details on plans for hydraulic fracturing in England.

In light of these developments, and in anticipation of decisions before you on licensing consents, we are seeking your answers to questions laid out at the end of this letter.

Climate change is the most urgent and complex threat to the British countryside today. With the majority of known fossil fuels needing to be kept in the ground, hydraulic fracturing in England risks undermining further deployment of renewables and energy-efficiency measures, jeopardises progress towards carbon reduction, and undermines our international leadership on climate change. Fracking is not currently credible in the context of the Paris climate change agreement or the UK's own targets, and is challenged by the three tests which the Committee on Climate Change (CCC) have established as pre-cursors to any permission to frack.

The UK is a leader in affordable, secure, low carbon alternatives. This government's support for offshore wind has seen the price drop by half to £57.50/MWh by 2022/23 – on a par with gas and considerably cheaper than new nuclear, even after accounting for intermittency costs. If government were to offer similar support for onshore wind, new low carbon power would be even cheaper. UK solar PV capacity is nearing 13GW – enough to power three million homes; costs have fallen 80% in the last decade, and rapid growth of battery storage offers huge opportunities to improve output and to relieve pressure on the national grid.

Shale gas extraction is a cause of significant concern in terms of its local impacts. Government research shows that people living close to fracking sites face increased levels of air pollution, both from vented gases and from increased levels of road traffic associated with the sites. At a time when the UK is in the midst of an illegal air pollution crisis, causing 40,000 premature deaths per year, fracking would only add to this problem. Fracking also poses significant risks to the natural environment through loss or fragmentation of habitat,

disturbance of wildlife and potential pollution of watercourses that support sensitive ecosystems and biodiversity.

Additionally, fracking is deeply unpopular with local communities. Opinion polling in the UK has consistently shown a majority are opposed to fracking, with the most recent government poll showing a record low of just 16% in favour. Over 99% of those responding to the Scottish government's consultation were opposed to fracking going ahead in Scotland. This should give the UK government pause for thought, particularly in light of the 2017 Conservative manifesto commitment to develop the shale industry only "...if we maintain public confidence in the process".

Aside from the climate, pollution, biodiversity, and local community concerns, recent geological evidence suggests there is not enough likely yield to justify the risks, and that extracting shale gas could be much more expensive than previously thought.

In Scotland, the Government concluded that fracking is incompatible with climate change targets, has no social licence, and is likely to add less than 0.1% annually to Scotland's GDP. In considering fracking in England, we therefore urge you to consider the risks we have set out here when taking decisions on hydraulic fracturing consents and future UK energy strategy. We specifically request answers to the following questions:

- 1) How are plans for hydraulic fracturing consistent with ensuring that we do not extract more gas globally than we can safely burn, and how are you addressing concerns laid out by the CCC that currently, fracking is incompatible with our climate change commitments?
- 2) What strategies are in place to ensure that local environmental impacts are kept to an acceptable level, and that local residents' concerns are addressed?

Yours sincerely,



Leo Murray
Director of Strategy
10:10



Mark Lloyd
Chief Executive
Angling Trust



Fiona Howie
Chief Executive
Campaign for National Parks



Crispin Truman
Chief Executive
Campaign to Protect Rural England



Steve Mason
Campaign Director
Frack Free United



John Sauven
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Paul Knight
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