

Date

Dear Cllr XXXX

Concerns about unconventional gas extraction and fracking

I am aware that though there is currently a moratorium on unconventional gas including coalbed methane and fracking in Scotland, companies have licenses to explore and extract unconventional gas, and that these areas could be under threat from development if the moratorium is lifted. If this were to happen, planning applications for unconventional gas could lead to commercial extraction.

I think that the Scottish Government and Parliament should work towards a full and permanent ban on unconventional gas extraction because:

- the risks to the local environment and human health are too great
- exploiting this new source of gas will seriously jeopardise our legally binding climate change targets

Extracting coalbed methane involves drilling vertically and horizontally into the coal seam, pumping out the water and extracting gas. Often, as gas flow declines hydraulic fracturing, or 'fracking' is used to get the last of the gas out. In Australia the industry estimates that up to 40% of coalbed methane wells will be fracked.

There is a growing body of evidence that environmental and health risks associated with onshore unconventional gas extraction, including coalbed methane and shale gas, are inherent and impossible to eliminate.

A key risk is in relation to our climate targets: unconventional gas extraction is energy intensive, and burning the gas contributes to emissions. Moreover, the impact of 'fugitive emissions' of potent greenhouse gas methane through leaks, flaring and venting has led scientists to argue that the climate impact of unconventional gas is greater than that of coal.

There is also alarming evidence about the potentially devastating public health impacts for communities living in and near gas fields. This has led to a number of bans and moratoria around the world, including a ban on all coalbed methane drilling (not just fracking) within 2km of communities and sensitive industries in New South Wales, Australia.

Coalbed methane or shale gas projects tend to need a great many wells, therefore significantly increasing the risk of something going wrong. I would not like to see Scotland unnecessarily open its door to these risks.

Scotland has plentiful renewable resources to harness for clean, green, safe energy in the form of wave, wind and tidal. Exploiting new forms of unconventional gas is a dangerous distraction from the urgent need to transition to renewable energy, in order to avert climate change.

So far over 13 states and countries have implemented bans or moratoria including New South Wales, Ireland, France, Spain and Canada – with more set to follow suit.

I too want to live in a country free of unconventional gas projects and fracking.

As my Councillor I am asking you to:

- find out more about the risks associated with unconventional gas extraction. I enclose a briefing for your information
- ensure that the XXXX Local Development Plan does not include a presumption in favour of unconventional gas extraction, and at a bare minimum requires 2km buffer zones between sites and communities
- work towards a ban on unconventional gas extraction within the Local Authority area

I look forward to your response.

Yours Sincerely

Name

Address

Postcode

TEMPLATE COUNCIL LETTER