


Carl Sargeant AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Cyfoeth Naturiol
Minister for Natural Resources



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-422
Ein cyf/Our ref CS/00060/15

William Powell AM
Chair Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

 January 2015

Dear Bill,

Thank you for your letter dated January 2015 which seeks my views on the document "All that glitters..." and the related "petition" against fracking submitted to the Petitions Committee by Gareth Clubb.

I understand that the petition comprised around 2,080 signatories on postcards and petition papers referencing Friends of the Earth Cymru, Friends of the Earth and Frack Free Wales. A further 44 signatures were received on petition papers from Frack Free Llantrisant.

It is important to note that oil and gas matters are not devolved to Wales and remain the responsibility of the UK Government. However, detailed policy advice on shale gas, as well as other forms of unconventional oil and gas projects, is contained in national planning policy, specifically Minerals Planning Policy Wales. The policies set out a precautionary approach and identify the environmental impacts that must be addressed by planning authorities to ensure that any proposed development does not impact adversely on the environment, communities or wider society.

On the 8th July I issued a Clarification Letter (CL-04-14) to Chief Planning Officers in Wales. The letter reinforces the relevant national planning policies and their application for onshore unconventional oil and gas development. This is available online at: <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/planning/policy/policyclarificationletters/2014/cl-04-14/?lang=en>

It should be noted that planning permission, which will be required for each separate stage of unconventional oil and gas activities, (exploration, appraisal and extraction,) is one aspect of the rigorous regulatory consent and permitting regime. Natural Resources Wales, the environmental regulator for Wales and a statutory consultee in the planning process in Wales, has responsibility for issuing permits to ensure the protection of the environment. In addition, the Health and Safety Executive regulate and monitor industry practice and operation for the purposes of public safety.

The Welsh Government has worked with the Office for Unconventional Gas and Oil on the production of a regulatory roadmap for onshore oil and gas exploration for Wales, which was published in December 2013. This regulatory roadmap sets out the regulatory and permissions process for exploratory work in oil and gas development onshore in Wales. This is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/regulatory-roadmap-onshore-oil-and-gas-exploration-in-the-uk-regulation-and-best-practice>.

We will continue to consider all the available evidence as it emerges including, where necessary bespoke Wales based studies to determine the potential impact on the Welsh environment and the people of Wales.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'CS' or similar initials, written in a cursive style.

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