

Dear [MP's name],

Permitted development for non-fracking drilling

I am writing to urge you to write to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government urging him not to enable non-fracking drilling to take place as permitted development without local planning permission.

I welcome the fact that no mention was made of this in the Queen's Speech, but I am concerned that the Government might attempt to introduce changes to permitted development rules by secondary legislation.

Non-fracking drilling can have major local impacts, including traffic, landscape impacts, noise and the generation of large amounts of mining waste. Bringing it within permitted development would mean no planning application, no environmental impact assessment in most cases, no local democratic scrutiny and control and no voice for local people.

Such a move would be deeply unpopular. A recent opinion poll for Friends of the Earth¹ surveying the views of residents of Lancashire, where Cuadrilla is hoping to frack in the near future, found that 66% of residents opposed the move, with 46% strongly opposed. This was also unpopular among Conservative voters, with 45% opposed and 39% supportive. I believe that a similar level of opposition would be found across the country, wherever such drilling was proposed.

Removing local democratic scrutiny and control would run counter to the Government's stated commitment to localism. As the current Energy Secretary Greg Clark MP told local councils while Secretary of State for Communities & Local Government "*Don't let yourself, any longer, be ruled by someone else*"². But, by taking away the power of a local council to decide on whether or not it wants such significant and controversial development in its area, this is precisely what the Government would be doing.

I urge you in the strongest possible terms to ask the Secretary of State to confirm that proposals to bring non-fracking drilling within permitted development will not be pursued by the Government.

Yours sincerely,

¹ <https://www.foe.co.uk/sites/default/files/downloads/fracking-survey-results-june-17-103864.pdf>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/greg-clark-tells-local-government-association-take-power-now>