

Fracking briefing for 2016 Scottish Elections

We do not own the world, and its riches are not ours to dispose of at will...Work to ensure that our increasing power over nature is used responsibly, with reverence for life.

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What is Fracking?

The term 'fracking' is used to refer to a process of fracturing shale rock to extract shale gas (or oil). This gas is known as 'shale gas' (and the oil 'shale oil'). A mixture of chemicals, sand and water is injected deep underground at high pressure to fracture the rocks, releasing the shale gas.

Shale gas is one example of an 'unconventional fossil fuel'. Though there is no strict definition of unconventional fossil fuels conventional oil, gas and coal can be extracted relatively easily. Unconventional fuels are usually more dispersed, and harder and more carbon intensive to extract. As conventional sources become less available and rise in price, unconventional sources which were previously financially unviable, have become commercially attractive.

Unconventional fossil fuel sources include shale gas, tar sands, coal bed methane, underground coal gasification, and shale oil.

Fracking and climate change – a Quaker Concern

In 2015, Quakers in Britain joined calls for a ban on fracking. Fracking is likely to lock us into a fossil fuels-based power system instead of transitioning to renewable and low-carbon energy. Investment in techniques like fracking could divert money and support away from renewable solutions. Quakers in Britain recognise an urgent need to tackle climate change, and are have committed to work with others to build a more sustainable and fair society.

As well as its climate impact, many people are concerned that fracking harms the local environment, can create health risks and that local communities have little say in decisions about extraction.

What is the current situation in Scotland?

In January 2015 the Scottish Government announced a moratorium on onshore oil and gas extraction. However underground drilling has already taken place in some areas through licences that were issued by the Westminster Governments Department for Energy and Climate Change previously.

The consultation period, during which the Scottish Government is gathering evidence on fracking, is expected to end in early 2017.

What do the parties support?

The SNP are currently awaiting evidence on fracking before making a decision on if an outright ban will come into place. Among the grass roots members there is strong anti-fracking feeling.

Labour and the Scottish Greens are anti-fracking.

The Liberal Democrats voted for fracking at their annual conference. The decision was then overturned by the party leadership, but reports suggest there is still a strong pro-fracking faction within the members.

Engaging with your candidate

If you agree, tell your MP that you support a ban on fracking, and call for support for sustainable energy instead. You may want to explain why Quakers are concerned.

Ask:

Will you support a ban on Fracking?

How will you support a transition to a low-carbon sustainable economy in Scotland?

Further information

Friends of the Earth Scotland [details](#) where in Scotland fracking licences are held.

Also from Friends of the Earth Scotland a briefing on the [constitutional and legal](#) issues around fracking.