

PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT AND NSIP CAMPAIGN

GUIDELINES FOR WRITING TO YOUR MP AND COUNCILLORS

The government are planning to make non-hydraulic exploratory drilling for shale gas **Permitted Development**, which means fracking companies won't need local planning permission to build a 1.5-hectare exploratory well site. They are also planning to make full scale industrial fracking a **Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project**, which means the decisions regarding whether or not fracking is allowed will be made by the Secretary of State and a Planning Inspector – not your local council planning authority.

To read more on how this came about and what it means, please click [here](#). And for a detailed analysis, please download this Friends of the Earth briefing, which will give you all the extra information you need to make a powerful case.

[FoE Briefing Permitted Development Non-fracking Drilling July 2018](#)

What can I do to stop this happening?

One of the most important things you can do is contact your MP and local councillors asking them to oppose the government's plans to fast-track fracking and bypass local democracy. There is already a great deal of opposition to these proposals across all parties, with a [recent survey](#) showing that 80% of Conservative councillors oppose their own party's Permitted Development plans.

How do I find out who my MP and councillors are?

YOUR MP - To find out your MP's name and contact details, please click [here](#). You can also Google him/her to find out their local constituency office, which is useful if you want to go and meet your MP (see the end of this post for more on this).

COUNCILLORS - To find out who your local councillors are, please visit the website of your local county council. It should be fairly easy to find the name(s) and contact details of your councillor(s). You can contact your Town Councillors and/or Parish Councillors too.

Note that MPs and councillors are only obliged to respond to people who are their constituents, so just focus on your own local representatives.

What should I say to them?

Firstly, it's important that you try to make your points in your own words. MPs and Councillors are much more likely to respond positively to a personal letter than a downloadable template. So here are some suggestions for the structure and wording of your letter or email.

And if you only have time to send a template letter, then you can use [this one](#), which is part of the #FracturedCommunities campaign being run by the Campaign to Protect Rural England, or [CPRE](#).

Introduce yourself. Say who you are, where you live, what you do, etc. This only needs to be a sentence or two, but it helps to start the correspondence off on a personal footing and establish yourself as a 'real person' - which you obviously are!

Explain the issue. Next, briefly explain what the issue is and why you oppose it. Here are some phrases you might want to use or adapt - don't cut and paste the whole lot, just **pick one from each section** - or you can always write your own.

INTRODUCTORY SENTENCE

The government is proposing that non-hydraulic exploratory drilling for shale gas is classed as Permitted Development, and that full-scale industrial fracking should be made a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project.

You may be aware that the government is planning to make non-hydraulic exploratory drilling for shale gas Permitted Development, and to class industrial-scale fracking as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project.

EXPRESSING YOUR OPPOSITION

I strongly oppose both of these proposals, which seek to bypass local democracy and fast-track fracking against the wishes of local communities.

These proposals strike me as very anti-democratic, as local communities and their elected representatives would have little say in whether their neighbourhood gets fracked.

I hope you will join me in opposing these plans, which are an attempt to centralise planning decisions related to fracking and impose this unwanted, unsafe and unnecessary industry on unwilling communities.

PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT

Classifying exploratory drilling as Permitted Development would remove the need for local authority planning permission for well sites, removing councils' decision-making powers and bypassing local communities' wishes.

If these Permitted Development proposals go ahead, getting planning permission for exploratory drilling could be as easy as for building a conservatory or a shed.

Building a 1.5-hectare well-site close to people's home is not what the permitted development rules were designed for and is a misuse of existing planning law.

NSIP

Making fracking a NSIP would mean that decisions about fracking would end up being imposed by central government, bypassing communities and local decision-makers.

If designated as NSIP, fracking proposals would go through a national planning process that would reduce local jurisdiction, and the final decision would be taken by the Secretary of State and the Planning Inspectorate, not locally elected councils.

OTHER COMMENTS

Taken together, these proposals this would reduce local representation all the way through the planning process for fracking, from exploration to production.

A [report](#) from the Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee urged the government to drop its plans for PD and NSIP and describes these proposals as 'hugely harmful'.

The concerns of local people should be placed at the heart of the planning system, but these proposals completely undermine this principle.

Local people and their elected representatives are best placed to decide if fracking should be allowed in their areas - not central government ministers.

You can of course add further details about why you oppose fracking, any local experience you have had fighting the fracking industry, concerns about the impact of starting a new fossil fuel industry on climate change, health problems associated with fracking, impact on our countryside, etc. etc.

OK, so I've explained the problem to my MP and Councillor. What should I ask them to do about it?

Here are some things you can ask your MP or Councillors to do to oppose these plans. Please make sure you include the first two asks, i.e. the open letter and the consultations.

Ask them to sign this [Open Letter to the Government](#) to oppose Permitted Development. (Here's the link for the **Open Letter** page that you can cut and paste onto your email or letter: <https://gofossilfree.org/uk/let-communities-decide-letter/>)

Encourage them to submit a response to the two **government consultations** on PD and NSIP. Here are the consultations links in full if you want to cut and paste them into your letter or email:

PD Consultation: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/permitted-development-for-shale-gas-exploration>

NSIP Consultation: <https://beisgovuk.citizenspace.com/energy-development/nsip-shale-gas/>

Ask them to write to **Claire Perry** (Minister of State for Energy and Clean Growth) and **James Brokenshire** (Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government) on your behalf to express their opposition to the government's plans. Their email addresses are claire.perry.mp@parliament.uk and james.brokenshire.mp@parliament.uk.

Raise the issue on local media by sending out a **press release**.

(MPs) **Ask a question** about fracking, PD and NSIP at the Ministers' Parliamentary Question Time or at Prime Minister's Question Time.

(Councillors) **Propose a motion** for debate at a council meeting that condemns the government proposals and calls for all decision-making on fracking to be retained by democratically elected local councils.

Finally, ask them to write back to you with their views on the subject and to forward any responses they receive from ministers.

Then you're done! All you have to do is send the emails, pop the letters in the post, and pour yourself a well-earned drink!

I'd like to go and see my MP personally to make my point. How do I do this?

Good for you! Going to see your MP is a great way of raising the issue, and we would urge everyone to do this if you have the time.

We suggest that you check out your MP's constituency website, find out when his/her next surgery is and make an appointment. You can then meet your MP face to face and share your concerns. If you do this, make sure you ask him/her to do something concrete, such as contacting the Ministers above, make a press statement condemning the plans, ask question in Parliament, etc. Then you can follow up after the meeting and find out what the response was.

For more guidelines on how to engage with your local representatives, please take a few minutes to read the very useful and comprehensive guide on the [Let Communities Decide website](#).

Great, that's very helpful. What should I do next?

Spread the word about this issue with all your neighbours, friends, family and colleagues, either by sending them a link to this page or downloading and sharing this leaflet:

[Permitted development NSIP leaflet 08.08.18](#)