

Re Planning ref P20130660

Welsh gov ref H6955/A/14/2218276

Description: Part of field wet of Commonwood Farm and South of Borrass Road,
Commonwood, Holt, Wrexham

I am writing in support of Wrexham Borough Council's decision to decline permission for test drilling for coalbed methane gas at the above site. I would like to draw your attention to the following points:

1. The area has an inadequate road network to cope with the increased volume of HGV traffic. The roads are winding, narrow country lanes and are completely unsuitable for these vehicles. Even at nearby Farndon, which has a straight A road serving it, there were problems to verges and kerbstones during the test drilling period. In addition to this it would bring unacceptable disruption to locals together with noise and air pollution.
2. There is no plan for an Environmental Impact assessment to be undertaken, which is completely unacceptable. As this is a test site, and as such a precursor to other sites if gas were to be found, surely it is imperative that an EIA is done so that future decisions can be based on recorded data.
3. The DECC 2012 report titled "The Unconventional Hydrocarbon Resources of Britain's Onshore Basins" shows that CBM is unlikely to be recoverable in this area due to the lack of an essential layer of impermeable rock. It is likely therefore that this site is being used just so that Dart Energy can retain their PEDL making the environmental impact even more unacceptable.
4. The drilling would go through the Kinnerton Formation which contains a major aquifer. When initial drilling takes place, the drill is not contained within a well casing. Therefore as it passes through the water, it is highly likely to contaminate it with fragments of rock containing heavy metals and even potential radioactive contaminants. This poses an unacceptable risk to the local water supply.
5. It is stated that after use the borehole will be plugged and abandoned. As all boreholes eventually fail, there will inevitably be gas escaping in the future and there is no plan to monitor wells after abandonment which means that no one will know. It is irrelevant how thick the well casing is or how many layers of cement and steel there are, the well will fail. Problems occur between whichever is the outer layer and the rock through which it passes. The cement here will crack allowing gas to escape to the surface.
6. Dart Energy has a very bad record for environmental violations in Australia and in the UK, including releasing benzene polluted water into the Firth of Forth. They cannot be trusted to operate within regulatory guidelines.
7. Householders have been told that insurance companies will not cover damage to their properties caused by gas drilling.
8. In view of the Gresford mining disaster, caused by a huge gas explosion, it would seem possible that the same thing could happen with unconventional gas extraction if a similar pocket of gas were to be stumbled upon.

I implore the Welsh Assembly to uphold the decision made by Wrexham Borough Council.

With kind regards

Fiona Young