I am responding to this enquiry because I and my am a great fan of North Yorkshire. I had a fabulous holiday last year in the North Yorkshire Moors at Sandsend near Whitby and spent days walking around the beautiful moors. A few years ago I had an enchanting time at the Swaledale Festival, where I marvelled at the beauty of this part of the world. I have visited Robin Hood Bay multiple times, one of my friends got married there.

This stunning landscape has got under my skin and hearing that fracking was going to take place hear made me feel ill. This is an unforgettable and pristine part of the UK, which attracts many visitors like me who need a refuge from their busy city lives.

Having been shocked to the core by the film Gaslands and consequently looked into the horrendous effects fracking has had on the health and environments in the US and Australia it is clearly NOT suitable for our small island, particularly since it uses such an obscene quantity of water, which is permanently polluted with a toxic cocktail. Moreover it requires drilling for sand, another substance there are not limitless quantities of.

When fracking was first undertaken in Blackpool in 2010 it immediately triggered seismic events and such events have multiplied dramatically in Pennsylvania, a US state which has enthusiastically adopted fracking.

http://grist.org/climate-energy/fracking-is-definitely-causing-earthquakes-another-study-confirms/

It is not as though one were talking about a single “inoffensive” well, shale gas companies are planning hundreds of wells per 10x10 km² PEDL licence area.

Moreover, widespread industrialisation of the countryside for shale gas production is incompatible with EFRA’s aim of developing sustainable rural tourism.

In Australia, fracking is not permitted within 2km of residences, however, currently the UK authorities are looking to allow fracking within 400m of homes, businesses and rural villages.

This will have a CATACLYSMIC effect on the quality of life and health of inhabitants, leading to huge outlays required to deal with consequential sickness.

It will destroy tourism – no one would want to potentially jeopardise their own health by staying in the vicinity of a noisy drill, discharging radioactivity and methane, not to mention the heavy traffic that would follow.

The companies undertaking the fracking have no obligation to make good the environmental damage they have inflicted – were this any other industry this would never have been allowed to happen.

There were 4735 objections to Fracking in Ryedale versus 36 supportive letters that this initiative should have got so far, makes nonsense of democracy.
Methane is one of the most potent greenhouse gases, trapping heat more than 86 times as efficiently as CO2 during the first couple of decades after it hits the atmosphere. So the inevitable leaks can have major implications for climate change.

See below for a cataclysmic leakage of methane in the US.


Conclusion

This is not a case of Nimbyism. I am writing as a Londoner who has to put up with polluted air and heavy traffic on a daily basis. I need to escape to other parts of the country where I can see a thriving wildlife and experience a pristine environment. Cancer is a growing health issue and fracking will multiply cases of cancer because of the toxicity of the chemicals and the proximity of peoples’ homes. Fracking is incompatible with a tourism industry, which is a sustainable industry which it will destroy. Rural employers like campsites, B&Bs, pubs and hotels will suffer a fall in visitor numbers and have to close. Fracking is banned or restricted by moratoria in many other countries, such as France, Germany, Bulgaria, Holland and Scotland, and in US states such as Maryland and New York State. A report in Mortgage Introducer magazine stated that properties near the only well that has ever been fracked, Preese Hall in Manchester, fell by 4%. This drop in property values will in turn have a negative effect on rural business investment, as people will be reluctant to invest in new and existing rural businesses in areas where fracking is taking place. Finally, Defra’s own report says that fracking would negatively impact the rural tourist sector.

Defra’s draft Shale Gas Rural Economy Impacts Paper, which was eventually published unredacted in July 2015, states the following: “Shale gas may transform a previously pristine and quiet natural region, bringing increased industrialisation. As a result, rural economy businesses that rely on clean air, land, water and/or a tranquil environment may suffer losses from this change, such as agriculture, tourism, organic farming, hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation.”

Defra as a body has a duty to oppose such developments within government, and should instead be working to promote sustainable, low-impact tourism in order to preserve the English countryside.

The EFRA Select Committee should commission a new independent report of the impact of the shale gas industry on the rural economy, including rural tourism and the impact on wildlife. In the meantime the EFRA Select Committee should demand an immediate moratorium on fracking and other forms of unconventional gas production.

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