Written evidence submitted by Clive Hinchliffe (RUT0030)

As a resident of a part of the country that benefits significantly from tourism, I am concerned that one of the biggest threats currently to the rural economy is fracking. Government figures from 2010 showed that tourism in predominantly rural areas was worth £10.7 billion Gross Value Added (GVA) to the UK. Here in East Yorkshire, tourism is worth £500 million each year to the economy. It forms a significant part of local income, along with agriculture. Allowing the use of extreme fossil fuel extraction in this area could be devastating.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs commissioned its own report into the impact of shale gas operations on the rural economy. The authors of this report concluded that rural community businesses such as agriculture, tourism, organic farming, hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation, which are reliant on clean air, land, water and/or a tranquil environment, may suffer losses.

One of the companies seeking to carry out fracking operation in Yorkshire, Ineos, has revealed in documents its intention to drill nearly 400 wells in each 38-square-mile block of its licence area. This is not the odd well screened by trees – this would result in the landscape being completely covered in gas wells. This is a landscape that currently attracts large numbers of walkers, cyclists, riders and others who come here to enjoy the peace and quiet of the countryside and the benefit of a beautiful, pollution-free environment away from the rigours of daily life.

Pollution is an important consideration. All the evidence from places where fracking currently takes place shows there has been widespread pollution of both water and
Medical experts have produced hundreds of peer-reviewed research papers linking fracking operations with a long list of serious medical conditions, including cancer. Here in East Yorkshire we are reliant on an underground aquifer for our drinking water. Do you truly believe that tourists who visit this part of the country to enjoy peace, quiet and fresh air would continue to visit a landscape covered in fracking wells? I don’t.

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