I have been a resident of Ryedale for 30 years and chose to live in this beautiful place for its peace and tranquillity and to bring up my daughter surrounded by countryside. I am very concerned about the damaging effects that fracking would have to Ryedale and to the rest of the UK. It will destroy rural tourism that this area depends on for their livelihood. I myself have recently started a business dependent on tourism. I am a horse owner and have recently bought a field to create a natural horse centre. It will have luxury lodges for people to stay and bring their horse and they will be able to trek to other horse/holiday accommodations across the North Yorkshire Moors.

I spend most of my holidays here in North Yorkshire as there is so much to do, I enjoy walking, riding and cycling and many of my friends who live down in Cornwall and Devon come here to walk and hike. I know they would be less likely to stay here if fracking was allowed as they like wild places, camping and peace.

I believe the industrialisation of the countryside is irreversible with the 950 wells, the 100s of lorry journeys connected to each well will destroy our small country roads and make them very dangerous for horse riders and cyclists. We will also see many more queues on the roads which are always busy in holiday seasons, making it more difficult to get anywhere for the tourists. Inevitably we will see more traffic accidents and risks taken to pass these lorries on windy narrow roads. Gone will be the peace and quiet of the countryside and I would not feel safe riding my horse anymore with the prospect of meeting lorry after lorry on roads not suitable for heavy traffic.

This is incompatible with EFRA’S aim of developing sustainable rural tourism. Drilling and fracking are noisy 24 hour –a-day activities creating light, noise and air pollution, businesses close to a well site like campsites, B&B’s, pubs, hotels, restaurants will suffer. New studies from John Hopkins University show that people living near fracking sites are 4x more likely to have asthma attacks. Why would people come for a holiday here with all the health issues and the pollution?

Widespread fracking would threaten thousands of permanent jobs in the tourist industry, as visitor numbers would fall and businesses would close.

I am also concerned about the consequences of any leakage or contamination which could affect farming, food and water as many restaurants and hotels offer local produce. Our nation’s protected areas, such as National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), World Heritage and Ramsar sites, etc. are hugely important for rural tourism and attract millions of visitors every year. There is currently no primary legislation banning fracking within these protected areas. Currently fracking in these areas is only restricted by planning conditions and government policy statements, not legislation. However, current legislation does allow fracking well-pads to be situated just outside the borders of these protected areas and wells can then be drilled horizontally underneath the protected areas.

This will dramatically affect wildlife tourism as the resulting noise, pollution and traffic would destroy the amenity of the country's most precious and wildlife-rich natural places.

If there is a leak in our water supply I feel that would be an end to life here in Yorkshire as we know it, fracking companies are not required to post a bond with local councils to pay for environmental clean-up, if indeed such clean-up were possible.

Please take note of the report from DEFRA that was redacted 63 times and only came to light after a long running public outcry.
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.”
- This paper also went on to say that fracking "may reduce the number of visitors and tourists to the rural area, with an associated reduction in spend in the local tourism economy."
- The first time this report was published it was redacted 63 times, including sections on house prices, economic impacts, social services, local services and the executive summary.
- The unredacted report was finally published in July 2015, only because the government was forced to do so by the Information Commissioner after a long-running public outcry.
- When it was finally published, Defra distanced itself from the report’s conclusions, claiming that it was an early draft of an internal document, was not analytically robust, and that work on this report had been discontinued.
- Many people wonder why the report was discontinued, instead of being re-drafted so that it was considered by Defra to be ‘analytically robust’ and suitable for publication. Was the effect of fracking on the rural economy not worthy of further examination?
- Defra has therefore never completed a comprehensive report on the effect of fracking on the rural economy – which of course would include the rural tourism sector, the subject of this enquiry. Is this perhaps because Defra knows that the results of such a report would be overwhelmingly negative?

**Conclusion**

I wonder whether the government has considered how much support people will need when tourism becomes a thing of the past here in Ryedale and across the country. They will not only lose millions in tax revenue but will need to support all those people who lose their jobs.

It is clear that widespread fracking will have a very damaging effect on tourism in rural areas, and I believe that the shale gas industry is one of the greatest threats facing rural tourism in England.

I feel that Defra 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.

I recommend that 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. Until such a report is produced, the EFRA Select Committee should demand an immediate moratorium on fracking and other forms of unconventional gas production.

*August 2016*