I am appreciative of the fact that the Government has seen fit to consult with communities on the importance of Tourism to the Local Community.

Here in Lancashire we have many beautiful and fascinating areas of countryside which draw visitors from local and distant places. Many people having visited Lancashire for the first time are amazed by the variety of landscape, from hills to plains to coast; from stately homes to museums and parks; from quiet retreats to lively seaside resorts. Canals criss-cross the County with all the delights of exploration they afford. Cycle paths have been carefully developed.... the two best known to me being The Preston Guild Wheel and the path linking Glasson Dock to historical Lancaster on the Lune Estuary.

Only this week I explored a beautiful area I am not so familiar with, the Wyre Valley, only to wonder like so many others.... why have I not been here before?!

I could write at length about Lancashire. Like many residents I am very proud of my County. At times I am irritated when I feel we are over-looked for more famous localities such as the Lake District or the Yorkshire dales... beautiful though they are. It is not just hearsay that visitors to Lancashire find the people warm and friendly and willing to help. What greater asset for a successful tourism industry?

It is because I care passionately about our lovely County that I am most concerned to find the Government Document makes no mention at all of the affect Shale Gas extraction would have on our Tourism industry. Has this deliberately been omitted from consideration?

The Defra Rural Economy Impacts Paper ... first in redacted form and then later when fully published, clearly demonstrates the potential of Shale Gas extraction to damage communities and by association to affect tourism. If I may quote from the Energy Consultant at Friends of the Earth, Tony Bosworth

“Reacting to the report’s publication, Friends of the Earth energy campaigner Tony Bosworth said, ...
“Businesses could also suffer as it (the Defra report) reveals that fracking threatens agriculture, tourism, organic farming, hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation businesses through increased industrialisation of previously tranquil and pristine rural areas.” ..... 

In short... this Consultation Document suffers from a major omission which should be rectified. No Consideration of Communities and Tourism can be complete without reference to the threat from fracking. Not just in Lancashire but increasingly in other rural and semi-rural areas of the UK.

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