

“THE SAFETY OF THE PEOPLE IS THE HIGHEST LAW.”

PART TWO: THE ALLEGED NEED TO INDUSTRIALISE RURAL ENGLAND

The threatened industrialisation of rural England is based on the specious proposition that the nation needs high volume hydraulic fracturing (HVHF). It is now known this process is seriously dangerous in a very large number of ways, (see Part Three) and that the regulations to protect both people and environment are unfit for their purposes (see Part Four).

The legitimate question therefore arises: just how necessary is this injurious process that report after report shows we cannot regulate to make safe?

Below are some of the reasons for thinking it is **not** necessary.

1. David Howell’s (no one more experienced in Energy policy) writes in his 2016 book *Empires in Collision* (ISBN 9781908531636) to explain how bad was the energy policy of the Coalition and the European Union, and how fracking is not something we ought to have in this country – at least in rural areas, he writes:

Surrounded by gas producers eager to pipe more to the British market and the high seas are loaded with cargos of ... frozen gas ... looking for a buyer. Scarcity and shortage of supplies are not a problem ... and if there is to be any fracking, it should not be within 10km of people’s houses.

2. **Country after country in mainland Europe, and within the United Kingdom itself, have declared moratoria against fracking so that only two main European countries, Spain and England, now allow it – England is the only UK nation that feels it must industrialise its quintessentially beautiful rural land.**
3. MICHAEL HILL, B.Sc (Hons.) C.ENG MIET, HYDRAULIC FRACTURING REGULATION EXPERT AND CONTRIBUTOR TO THE RS/RAEng REPORT wrote, in May 2017:

“We simply do not know the recoverability figs yet but HVHF is likely, at best and at its height, to provide between 10-15% of the UKs gas needs. So 85% will still need to come from elsewhere. So the security argument is spurious. Also, to get that 15%, there will need to be some many thousands of wells. 6000 in the Fylde alone ...

It is not necessarily cheaper to get our own. It is cheaper to import it from the USA. Fracking is expensive despite government removing all regulations and any other “unnecessary costs”. There is no evidence at all that fracking in the UK is cheaper than buying from abroad and it is most certainly not common sense either.

Fracking on average in the US produces 5% fugitive emissions. Once you go over 3.7% you would be “cleaner” from a ghg emissions view point, to burn coal! Fracking is, due to the extraction process, dirtier than coal. It is not a clean energy. This is the industry’s propaganda machine at full work. Vested interests. It is not a bridge to a low carbon economy. It is a bridge to nowhere.

As I worked in oil and gas automating it then I can say that from my experience and knowledge the number of jobs created by fracking might reach approx. 15,000 nationally. Association of Mining & Exploration Companies (AMEC) agreed with me when they did a study on this for the then Sec of State Davey. When you consider the downturn in local economic activity caused by fracking (Tourism, farming and traffic/gridlock etc.) then for the Fylde alone the job losses are estimated at 20,000. Fracking is a net jobs destroyer not creator. That is common sense. What tourists are going to want to holiday in an area with 600 flares and known carcinogenic affects? None. What customers are going to want to purchase produce that has been produced on farms with fracking? None. Once fracking is known for what it is – a dirty and dangerous industry that is inadequately regulated and monitored then I am afraid the job losses will mount.”

4. New evidence from Howard Rogers, Chairman, Natural Gas Research Programme March 2017, and senior research fellow at The Oxford Institute for Energy Studies, doubts the chances of fracking working in England:

<http://m.gulf-times.com/story/536674/Energy-expert-sees-bleak-prospects-for-UK-shale-ga>

He sees supplies of gas from Qatar, Norway, Holland, and Belgium (through the interconnector) remaining key:

“Qatar has a medium-term contract with Centrica ... if prices are higher elsewhere, some of the gas can be diverted. But given Qatar’s investment into the import facility at South Hook, it is likely to continue to place significant baseload volumes of LNG into the UK for the foreseeable future ...

“There is a huge question over whether well sites are viable economically as individual investments. Even if successful, would a few shale gas pads — albeit drilling multiple wells with horizontal sections going off in different directions — make a meaningful contribution to the UK’s gas production which is already falling in terms of conventional gas production from the North Sea?

“The context for the shale gas industry in the US is very different to that in the UK. In the US, you have vast areas of ranch land where the local landowner has mineral rights. If the landowners have no better use for the land, they are happy for the *fracking* to take place. Those activities are not usually visible from public highways. In the UK, by contrast, the drill sites would mostly be visible.”

Even with a focus on drilling multiple wells in the same location with several multi-laterals off the main bore, there would be notable environmental impacts.

5. As long ago as January 2015, and never since contradicted, the House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee & Committee on Climate Change Environmental Audit Committee, calls for halt to *fracking* specifically stating: **“Shale gas cannot be viewed as a bridging fuel for the UK.**
6. **Morally, it is arguable that it is less damaging to mankind for England to import gas from America, where the regulations are stronger than ours, than wreck lives by introducing all the destructive hazards of fracking to rural England.**

7. **When contemplating the regulations in part four, none should forget that our “English regulations” don’t even specify a minimum distance between fracking and homes so that, in the Fylde, for example, with a population density of 461 persons per square kilometre, about four times that of rural Pennsylvania which is quoted by the industry as a shining exemplar for fracking, the Fylde fracking will happen within five miles of one fifth of a million people, 4,500 of them living within two miles, and a primary school only a mile downwind from the fugitive emissions and diesel exhausts of the Fylde fracking area – known as a *sacrificial zone* in parts of America.**