

INEOS is about fracking, plastics & pollution of our climate and oceans - not about the ethical & environmental standards of the World Sailing Association

Open Letter to World Sailing President, Mr Kim Andersen

October 2018

Dear Mr Andersen,

It is with grave concern and disappointment that we have witnessed your ongoing silence and complicity in relation to INEOS Team UK, an America's Cup 2021 entrant sponsored by a company known for its [environmentally destructive practices](#) and ongoing [assault on the democratic right to protest](#).

In your [Code of Ethics](#), World Sailing makes a promise *"to protect the environment on the occasion of any events...and to uphold generally accepted standards for environmental protection."* World Sailing further claims to support the [objectives](#) of increasing and developing awareness of sustainability issues amongst *all* sailing stakeholders. The ongoing presence of INEOS Team UK in World Sailing's headline event single-handedly shatters these endeavours, bringing both World Sailing, and yourself, into disrepute. This is not *"very environmentally aware"* behaviour that World Sailing claims to embody and promote.

Your decision to permit the participation of any team sponsored by INEOS undermines World Sailing's commitments to respecting and safeguarding our environment. These are commitments that World Sailing has made consistently clear across each of its governing documents, including most recently in the [Sustainability Agenda 2030](#). While we applaud World Sailing's commitment *"to respect and contribute to ecosystem health and biodiversity"*, and *"to promote a culture of sustainability"*, surely you recognise that actions speak louder than words?

INEOS is the largest owner of shale gas – "fracking" – licences in the UK (not to mention one of Europe's leading crude oil refiners). In case you are unaware, fracking – otherwise known as hydraulic fracturing – involves injecting large amounts of water and sand, combined with hazardous chemicals, into rock formations to fracture surrounding material for the purpose of extracting oil and gas. As early as 2012, a [UN Environment Programme \(UNEP\) issued a "Global Alert" on fracking](#), warned that *"fracking may have environmental impacts even if done properly, and that existing regulations are insufficient"*.

The [gathered scientific evidence shows](#) that fracking's detrimental environmental and public health dangers are numerous and significant. As a brief overview, these include [polluted groundwater](#), [large volume water use](#), greenhouse gas emissions (leading to [increased air pollution](#) and [climate change exacerbation](#)), exposure to [toxic chemicals](#), and fracking-induced [earthquakes](#).

Women, communities of colour and the poor are especially vulnerable to environmental injustices and harm. These facts prompted the [UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women \(CEDAW committee\) to ask of the UK Government](#) to *"provide information on the measures being taken to mitigate and address the health, and environmental, impacts of toxic substances on women and girls, particularly rural women, due to planned fracking activities"*.

The [Permanent People's Tribunal on Fracking, Human Rights and Climate Change concluded in May 2018 in its preliminary statement](#) that the evidence demonstrates that fracking contributes substantially to climate change and global warming and involves *"massive violations of a range of substantive and procedural human rights"*.

In the case of INEOS however, the damage is at least twofold, arising by virtue of both its fracking production methods *and* its intended product output; that being the [production of more and more disposable plastics](#). INEOS is one of Europe's biggest producers of disposable plastics. They are [using the fracked gas \(ethane, propane etc\) for cheap feedstocks for plastic production](#). Far from being a suitable partner for sailing and sustainability, did you know that INEOS was behind the lobbying by the British Plastics Federation (BPF) against the 5p plastic bag charge? The BPF called the charge "pointless and unnecessary". Despite their efforts, the law was passed and plastic bag usage in England dropped by a whopping 85%.

Mr Andersen, we know that you are already all too aware of the pressing issues posed by the plastic contamination of our oceans. In June this year, World Sailing joined the Clean Seas Campaign, [partnering](#) with the International Olympic Committee and UN Environment to "beat plastic pollution".

In your 2018 Presidential Update, you emphasised the "*positive values*" on which sailing as a sport is built. These include, as you noted, your "*contribution to society, environmental sustainability, and water quality impact*". In the absence of urgent action against INEOS Team UK, your current contribution actively undermines these same values.

Crucially, however, you have the power to change this.

As the official governing body of the America's Cup, we urge World Sailing to disassociate itself from INEOS Team UK, at least until such time as Team UK secures sponsorship that is compatible with both World Sailing's stated environmental standards. This, Mr Andersen, is a simple ask.

In addition, we urge you to seize a moment of inspired leadership and consider the implementation of an ethical and environmentally friendly sponsorship policy. This should rule out partnership and sponsorship with companies whose core business exacerbates, among other things, climate change and human rights abuse. If World Sailing's [mission](#) is truly "*to create a tangible sustainability programme that maximises the positive effect that the sailing community can have on our environment*", we see no acceptable alternatives to this suggestion.

Under World Sailing's own Code of Ethics, a core part of "*the spirit of sailing*" is a "*love of the natural environment*".

Therefore Mr Andersen, in that spirit of sailing and the love of the natural environment we urge you to take a stand.

Yours sincerely,

Organisations:

1. Jennifer Robinson (Human Rights Lawyer and Barrister, [Doughty Street Chambers](#))
2. John Sauven (Executive Director, [Greenpeace UK](#))
3. Meaghan Carmody (Head of Mobilisation, [Friends of the Earth Ireland](#))
4. Dame Vivienne Westwood ([Vivienne Westwood](#))
5. Joe Corr  (Founder & Executive Director, [Talk Fracking](#))
6. Wenonah Hauter (Founder & Executive Director, [Food & Water Watch](#))
7. Delphine L vi Alvar s (European coordinator, [#Break Free From Plastic](#) movement)
8. Dr Philip Webber (Chair, [Scientists for Global Responsibility](#))
9. Dr Damien Short (Co-Director: [Human Rights Consortium](#), Editor in Chief: [International Journal of Human Rights](#))
10. David Azoulay (Managing Attorney, [Center for International Environmental Law](#))

11. Steve Mason (Founder & Executive Director, [Frack Free United](#))
12. Lorne Stockman (Senior Research Analyst, [Oil Change International](#))
13. Andy Gheorghiu (Policy Advisor & Campaigner, [Food & Water Europe](#))
14. Ethan Buckner (Energy Campaigner, [Earthworks](#))
15. Jojo Mehta (Co-founder, [Mission LifeForce](#))
16. Stuart Lane (Founder, [Cross Party Frack Free](#))
17. Erik Dalhuijsen (Founder/Director, [Aberdeen Climate Action CIC](#))
18. Naimah Omar (Spokesperson, [UK Youth Climate Coalition](#))
19. Jane Patton (Director, [No Waste Louisiana](#))
20. Melissa Haines (Spokesperson, [Middletown Coalition for Community Safety](#))
21. Jean Hesketh (Coordinator, [Frack Free Dudleston](#))
22. David Kesteven (Chairman, [Eckington Against Fracking](#))
23. Bob Street (Co-Ordinator, [Coal Aston & Dronfield Against Fracking](#))
24. David Larder (Chair, [Bassetlaw against Fracking](#))
25. Colin D Watson (Spokesperson, [Frack Free Upton](#))
26. Jackie Mayers (Spokesperson, [Ellesmere Port Frack Free](#))
27. Dave Adam (Spokesperson, [Frack Free Ryedale](#))
28. Suzanne Jeffery (Chair, [Campaign Against Climate Change](#))
29. Kim Hunter (Spokesperson, [Frack Free Scarborough](#))
30. Johnny McElligott (Spokesperson, [Safety Before LNG](#))
31. Pascoe Sabido (Researcher and Campaigner, [Corporate Europe Observatory](#))
32. Bas Oudenaarden (Campaigner, [Rotterdams Klimaat Initiatief](#))
33. Jenny Dixon (Spokesperson, [Frack Free East Yorkshire](#))

Academics:

- Prof. Robert W. Howarth (Ph.D., Professor of Ecology and Environmental Biology, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York)
- Prof. Nick Cowern (Director, NC Tech Insight Ltd. and Emeritus professor, Newcastle University)
- Prof. Peter Strachan (Professor of Energy Policy, Robert Gordon University Aberdeen Business School)
- Dr Keith Baker (Built Environment Asset Management (BEAM) Centre, School of Computing, Engineering and the Built Environment Glasgow Caledonian University)