

## Fracking: a threat to our climate

In recent years, anti-fracking campaigns have multiplied both across the UK and globally, winning notable victories. Campaigners are often motivated by immediate threats to local health and environment, from potential groundwater contamination to air pollution from constant lorry movements. It is important also to remember the wider context: 2016 is set to be the hottest ever year for our planet, and the impacts are becoming very clear. Droughts and floods have hit people in many parts of the world, and vital ecosystems such as coral reefs are struggling to survive. Anti-fracking campaigners are fighting to protect their children's future in more ways than one.

The most important way of tackling climate change is to leave fossil fuels in the ground. Recent research shows that currently producing oil and gas fields (without coal) would take us beyond 1.5C, the point where there is a real danger of serious "tipping points" in the world's climate. So pursuing new sources such as fracking is and elsewhere is direct threat to our climate, as well as a distraction from the urgent need to develop our clean energy infrastructure and shift to a sustainable economy.

However, shale gas from fracking has been promoted as a 'bridge fuel', heralded in the US especially as beneficial for the climate in helping a shift from dirty coal. This is unfortunately far from the truth. One reason is that methane gas is itself a powerful greenhouse gas, and in the US considerable leakage from drill and storage sites has occurred. This means that looking at emissions only from burning is misleading: shale gas could even be worse than coal for the climate.

### What about fracking in the UK?

The Climate Change Act commits us to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80% by 2050. The independent Committee on Climate Change have told the government that three tests need to be met in order for fracking not to break the UK's emissions targets.

1. Much stricter regulation to reduce the chance of methane leaks (cutting into industry profits)
2. Gas burning overall in the UK must not increase: it needs to drop by 80% by 2050 unless carbon capture and storage technology is implemented (as yet unproven at scale).
3. Emissions from shale gas production must be accommodated within the UK's carbon budget. Because the government has cut back on climate change action (for example cutting funding for renewable energy and energy efficiency), on current policies we will only have made half the emissions reductions we need to by 2030. We are set to massively overspend our carbon budget (and no credit card is available).

It is very clear that fracking on a significant scale in the UK would be one more push, and not a small one, away from sustainability and towards dangerous climate change.

### What's the alternative?

Communities who have successfully resisted fracking, Balcombe in Sussex and Barton Moss near Manchester, both took the positive step of setting up community renewable energy projects. Last-minute cuts to government renewables funding have made this more difficult and have meant that the solar farm which could provide energy for all Balcombe village can no longer be owned by the community. A commercial firm is looking to take over the project.

Despite the spin around fracking jobs, investing in a sustainable economy: renewables, home insulation and public transport creates far more sustainable employment.

We can all support communities resisting the imposition of fracking. We also need to challenge the government to back the alternative: clean energy, sustainable jobs and support for more democratic models of energy production.

## Fracking and climate change: find out more

### Climate change

- Climate change: An introduction: [www.campaigncc.org/climate\\_change/introduction](http://www.campaigncc.org/climate_change/introduction)
- Impacts of climate change: Our changed world: [www.campaigncc.org/currentimpacts](http://www.campaigncc.org/currentimpacts)
- Oil Change International (2016) The Sky's Limit: Why the Paris climate goals require a managed decline of fossil fuel production <http://bit.ly/2d1FBcD>

### Methane leaks from fracking: evidence

- Climate Central (2016) Study ties US to global spike in methane emissions [bit.ly/1R87smL](http://bit.ly/1R87smL)
- McKibben, B. (2016) Global warming's terrifying new chemistry. The Nation. [bit.ly/28ZYI9z](http://bit.ly/28ZYI9z)

### Committee on Climate Change report on fracking and climate

- Committee on Climate Change (2016) Onshore Petroleum: The compatibility of UK onshore petroleum with meeting the UK's carbon budgets [bit.ly/29kIH5D](http://bit.ly/29kIH5D)
- Fracking, climate targets and post-truth politics [www.campaigncc.org/fracking\\_climate\\_targets](http://www.campaigncc.org/fracking_climate_targets)

### Fracking jobs or climate jobs

- Campaign against Climate Change (2014) One Million Climate Jobs: Tackling the Environmental and Economic Crises. [www.campaigncc.org/climatejobs](http://www.campaigncc.org/climatejobs)
- Friends of the Earth (2015) Making a better job of it: Why renewables and energy efficiency are better for jobs than fracking <http://bit.ly/1Cd3DGa>

### Community energy projects

- [www.repowerbalcombe.com](http://www.repowerbalcombe.com)
- <http://mosscommunityenergy.org.uk>

### Fracking news

- Frack Off <http://frack-off.org.uk>
- Drill or Drop <https://drillordrop.com>



The Campaign against Climate Change works to bring about the urgent action needed to avoid catastrophic climate change.

Find out more about our campaigning at [www.campaigncc.org](http://www.campaigncc.org)

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