

Friends of the Earth attack Cairn Energy's "cowboy tactics"



This morning on Lothian Road at the offices of oil company, Cairn Energy, activists dressed as cowboys highlighted the company's potential role in the destruction of the Arctic. Their oil exploration plans include effectively lassoing icebergs which threaten their offshore drills. The cowboys were attempting to show how this might be done.

Cairn Energy, a Scottish-based oil and gas company, announced earlier this year that they will continue drilling for Arctic oil in 2014.

FOE Scotland say that Cairn's earlier activity in the Arctic was heavily criticised by the environmental sector and Arctic experts alike and that much criticism was focussed on the inadequacies within their oil spill response plan.

Paul Daly, Corporate Accountability Campaigner at Friends of the Earth Scotland, said:-"Cairn's oil spill response plan was literally laughable. They had some daft ideas that demonstrated quite how little regard they have for the environment and the Arctic.

"Cairn needs to have a serious re-think about their Arctic commitments. We urgently need to transition to a low carbon economy, not take advantage of the effects of climate change to find oil in newly exposed areas."

Professor Wadhams of Cambridge University, who recently appeared on the BBC's acclaimed 'Life and Death of an Iceberg', gave evidence to the UK government's 'Protecting the

Arctic' enquiry stating that Cairn Energy is a 'cowboy operation'. Professor Wadhams highlighted that Cairn's work is slapdash and dangerous – particularly given the sensitive, unique and unforgiving Arctic territory.

The enquiry concluded that there should be no Arctic drilling until there are much more stringent safety measures in place.

Chair of the Committee, Joan Walley MP, said: "The infrastructure to mount a big clean-up operation is simply not in place and conventional oil spill response techniques have not been proven to work in such severe conditions."