

# Anti-fracking protest at Holyrood



A 10ft pro-fracking puppet monster, Mr Frackhead, visited Holyrood today, on his tour of the UK looking for places to frack for shale gas. Mr Frackhead stopped for photos at the Scottish Parliament, Arthur's Seat and Holyrood Palace, where 'The Queen' tried to stop him from fracking under her Palace.

Holyrood is amongst many sites of significance across central and southern Scotland that fall within areas on offer in the 14th round of onshore oil and gas licensing. Under UK Government plans, the Queen, or any other house owner, would not be able to stop fracking underneath their homes.

Mary Church, head of campaigns at Friends of the Earth Scotland said:

"Unconventional gas is unsafe, unnecessary and unwanted. Evidence from the USA and Australia where fracking has been going on for some years links very serious public health impact to the industry. Going after a new source of fossil fuel in the context of the latest climate science is simply irresponsible and unnecessary in a country blessed with abundant renewable energy resources."

"Communities across Scotland are already fighting unconventional gas developments, but this latest round of licensing puts even more homes in the firing line. The UK Government is ignoring massive public opposition in its reckless dash for gas while the industry resorts to bribes in an effort to foist fracking on communities. [4] We urge MSPs and the Scottish Government to listen to concerns of the Scottish people and to use their existing powers to prevent the advance of unconventional gas fracking in Scotland."

Thousands of people in Scotland are currently opposing plans for coalbed methane extraction in their communities, an industry that has very similar impacts to shale gas fracking, and can often involve the use of fracking.





Maria Montinaro, of Concerned Communities of Falkirk commented "We live on a densely populated island and the Central Belt of Scotland, right where the industry wants to extract gas, is home to millions of people. Concerned Communities of Falkirk are calling for the Scottish Government to undertake a full Public Health Impact Assessment of the industry to prove to communities it is safe before any further operations take place here."

Bill Frew, Chairman of Canonbie Residents Association said "We are facing a real threat to our community from this industry where planning permissions at 19 sites were approved without any meaningful consultation with residents. A survey undertaken by Canonbie Residents Against Coal Development, involving more than 360 local people, shows that more than 90% of them reject these proposals. "

Patrick Harvie, Green MSP for Glasgow, last week used Topical Questions at Holyrood to urge Scottish ministers to adopt a tougher line on fracking.

A vast swathe of Scotland, from Argyll to Aberdeenshire and from Ayrshire to East Lothian, has been earmarked by the UK Government as ripe for the controversial gas drilling technique.

Last week the UK Government agreed to pass laws to let fracking companies drill below people's homes without consent, despite a consultation showing that 99% of responses oppose such a move.

Patrick Harvie MSP said:

“Drilling for gas will add massively to the existing stocks of fossil fuels – stocks we can’t afford to burn. The recent climate summit in New York has reminded us of the profound threat we face if we keep pumping greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.

“Communities across Scotland are rightly alarmed at the determination of the Tory-LibDem coalition to allow fracking. Today I urged Scottish Ministers to take a tougher line, given their recent description of fracking as an opportunity and their failure to ban it with the planning powers they already have.

“I welcome John Swinney’s commitment not to replicate the UK Government’s approach to drilling without consent, if the power to take action is devolved to Holyrood. However he has still not ruled out allowing fracking itself to go ahead in Scotland, and if we’re going to protect communities and the environment we’ll need both the power to legislate, and the political will to do so.”

Mr Frackhead is touring the UK ahead of arriving at Downing Street on Global Frackdown Day on Saturday October 11. You can follow him on Twitter [here](#).

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