



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

22nd May 2022

Jean Contrevent

RE: FRACKING.

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of fracking. I have read your comments on this with interest.

Ministers maintained that fracking should only proceed if the science shows that it is safe, sustainable and minimises disturbances to local communities. The Government therefore decided to halt fracking considering the most recent evidence.

In 2019, the Oil & Gas Authority, an independent regulator, found that it was not possible to accurately predict the probability or magnitude of earthquakes linked to fracking. As a result, the Government immediately announced a moratorium on fracking in England. This position will be maintained unless compelling new evidence is provided which addresses the concerns around the prediction and management of induced seismicity.

The wholesale price of gas and energy has increased in the UK and Europe due to various factors, including an increase in demand as economies across the globe reopened after lockdowns. In light of Russia's unjustified invasion of Ukraine, which has also contributed to further global gas price rises, the Prime Minister has been clear that it is right that we move away from dependence on Russian gas and increase self-reliance with our energy sources.

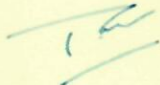
The Government is considering all the options; it has always been clear that it will be open to shale gas exploration if it can be done in a safe and sustainable way. Therefore, I welcome that the Government has commissioned the British Geological Survey to advise on the latest scientific evidence around shale gas extraction. This request has been made to simply assess if any progress has been made in the scientific understanding of fracking. I want to be clear the moratorium will remain unless the latest scientific evidence demonstrates that shale gas extraction is safe, sustainable and of minimal disturbance to communities. In addition, I am reassured by my ministerial colleagues that any exploration or development of shale gas would need to meet rigorous safety and environmental protections both above ground and sub-surface.

Furthermore, I am glad that the Prime Minister has now published the *Energy Security Strategy*, which outlines how cleaner and more affordable energy will be made in Great Britain to boost our long-term energy independence, security and prosperity. The strategy sets out how the Government will accelerate the deployment of wind, new nuclear, solar and hydrogen, whilst supporting the production of domestic oil and gas from the North Sea in the nearer term – which could see 95 percent of electricity by 2030 being low carbon.



You may be interested to know that renewable energy is cheaper than gas and therefore one long-term solution is to move in that direction. I welcome that the UK's renewable capacity is up 500 percent since 2010. However, the Government recognises that more must be done, and so is accelerating renewables with annual 'Contract for Difference' auctions. I want to be clear that the more cheap, clean power we generate in the UK, the less exposed we will be to global gas markets.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

With best wishes,


**TOM PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**