

June 12, 2015

Lancashire County Council
Council Members
By email

Dear Councillor Mein and members of the Lancashire County Council,

We write to you and your colleagues from the state of New York, as fellow elected representatives, and urge you not to allow fracking in Lancashire. We hope to offer our relevant experience, based upon which we believe you should turn down the planning applications made by Cuadrilla for drilling and testing.

Our group, Elected Officials to Protect New York is non-partisan and geographically diverse, and consists of more than 850 local elected officials from all 62 counties in New York State. Like you, our first duty is to the communities we represent, to safeguard their economy and environment and, above all, to protect the health of our citizens. We formed our network in 2012 because of growing concern about fracking as significant evidence emerged indicating risks and harms. Many of us have listened to countless hours of testimony by local residents against fracking, as well as doing our own research into the science, community impacts, and threats this industry poses. Throughout that years long process, over 180 municipalities in NY passed local prohibitions on fracking.

As you know, Governor Cuomo announced a statewide ban on fracking in New York State this past December. This followed a two year study by the state's Department of Public Health into the public health impacts of high volume hydraulic fracking (HVHF), which concluded that fracking poses significant public health risks and should be banned.

We believe these conclusions apply just as much to Lancashire as to New York.

Acting New York State Health Commissioner Dr. Howard Zucker ended his presentation on the health review by asking the poignant question, that after reviewing all of the scientific reports available to date, "would I let my family live in a community with fracking. The answer is no." That is a question we have had to ask ourselves, and we reached the same conclusion. It is a question that you must now ask yourself.

You will no doubt be told that strong regulations can ensure that fracking will be carried out safely. There is no evidence to justify that claim by the industry. In fact quite the opposite is true. High-volume hydraulic fracturing is an inherently risky process, and in the United States, water contamination, air pollution, earthquakes, and negative health and community impacts continue to get worse despite those same claims of safety and better regulations. The fracked well in Blackpool that structurally failed and caused two earthquakes could happen again in Lancashire, just as those same problems are increasingly occurring in the United States, if you allow one or more of the proposed exploratory wells.

We are sure that the fracking industry will promise jobs and prosperity. We urge you to treat these claims with deep skepticism. The experience in the U.S. is that these claims are false and vastly overstated. Meanwhile, local communities are faced with significant costs including road and infrastructure damage, emergency response, heightened crime rates, and lingering contamination and pollution. Additionally, fracking threatens to negatively affect existing economic sectors. Like Lancashire, New York has strong agriculture and tourism sectors. We believe that fracking would put these at risk.

To safeguard the county's economy and environment, and to protect the health of its citizens, we urge you to say no to fracking in Lancashire.

Yours sincerely,

Julie Huntsman
Former Councilmember
Town of Otsego

Jean Kessner
Councilor-at-large
City of Syracuse

Martha Robertson
Legislator
Tompkins County

Gregory Young
Supervisor
Fulton County

Carl Chipman
Supervisor
Town of Rochester

Susan Zimet
Supervisor
Town of New Paltz

James Dean
Trustee
Village of Cooperstown

Chad Davis
Legislator
Oneida County

Susan Skidmore
Mayor
City of Elmira

Lou Allstadt
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Village of Cooperstown