

Activists denounce earthquake report as 'dangerous distraction'

Written by Elaine

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The release today of a second report into the earthquakes caused by Cuadrilla resources' fracking activity in Lancashire has been met with disdain from environmental activists.

The report, commissioned by the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC), concludes that, 'it would not be possible to state categorically that no further earthquakes will be experienced during a similar treatment in a nearby well'.

Though seemingly damning, a report that focuses the minds of the press and public on minor seismic events could be seen as a PR coup for a company whose extraction method of choice has consistently been linked to groundwater contamination, severe methane leakage, air pollution, climate change and radioactive waste.

Companies involved in the search for, and extraction of, other types of unconventional gas in the UK are also likely to be enjoying the superficial investigation offered by the report.

Hydraulic fracturing (fracking) is a process used not just to get gas from shale rock, but also to get at gas trapped in un-minable coal seams (Coal Bed Methane). There is also a third form of unconventional gas extraction threatening the UK, known as Underground Coal Gasification (UCG), where un-minable coal is burnt underground and gas is collected at the surface.

All three extraction processes involve elements which are highly destructive. However, what is not being addressed is the what it would mean for all three of these processes to be in full production in the UK.

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Elsie Walker, a Frack Off activist, said,

'This report is a seriously dangerous distraction. People need to understand that the wave of unconventional gas development that is threatening the British Isles will bring with it far greater consequences than a number of small earthquakes'.

She continued,

'The scale of development proposed is being completely ignored. Cuadrilla want to drill 800 wells in Lancashire alone. They are one company going after one type of gas. There are several companies going after several types of unconventional gas in the UK and all potentially on a similar scale to Cuadrilla. If we allow this to happen, we will witness the total industrialisation of the British countryside and the destruction of the ecosystems we rely on for our survival. We cannot allow this to happen'.

'Even within the narrow context of earthquakes, this report misses all the real issues such as sub-surface damage to wells causing them to leak, the much larger earthquakes seen in the US as a result of wide spread shale gas development and the potential effects on sensitive infrastructure like nuclear power stations and railway lines'.

For more details see frack-off.org.uk