

# MARK MENZIES MP



## HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Dr Andy Samuel  
Chief Executive  
Oil & Gas Authority  
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27 August 2019

Dear Dr Samuel,

I am writing with regard to recent induced seismic activity as a result of hydraulic fracturing activities in Fylde.

I initially became aware of the shale gas industry operating in Fylde shortly after my election to be the Member of Parliament in 2010 and following the approval of Petroleum Exploration Development License 165 under the Labour Government in 2008.

As you may know, the first exploration site in Fylde was at Preese Hall, at which operations were ceased following a seismic event of 2.3 ML in 2011. This also led to the first moratorium on hydraulic fracturing in England following calls from myself and many others.

Since then, I have continued to do all I can to ensure that hydraulic fracturing exploration is carried out in a manner which guarantees the safety and security of the people of Fylde and their properties. The consistent calls for stringent and robust regulation of the shale gas industry from myself and others led to the implementation of several monitoring and regulatory conditions, including the traffic light system for monitoring seismicity that we see today.

Since the commencement of exploratory fracturing at Preston New Road, we have seen this traffic light system in use several times. This has forced the industry to suspend activities, inspecting the well integrity and ensuring that readings are in line with the Hydraulic Fracture Plan, before they are able to continue. Without this system in place we may be in a very different position to that of today.

Throughout this process, I have remained open to the prospect of a shale gas industry as long as the safety and security of Fylde residents could be guaranteed. It would now appear that is no longer the case.

Hydraulic fracturing of the first well on Cuadrilla's site at Preston New Road (PNR1z) began in October of 2018 and continued until December 2018. A total of 57 seismic events were recorded throughout this period, seven of which breached the 0.5 ML traffic light system limit.

### MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR FYLDE

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Earlier this month Cuadrilla began hydraulic fracturing operations on its second well at Preston New Road (PNR2). Since that date we have seen more than 100 seismic events with nine breaching the 0.5M<sub>L</sub> limit. Many of these tremors have come after hydraulic fracturing has ceased at the site, including the most serious, which was an event of 2.9 M<sub>L</sub> on the morning of 26th August.

Public concern over this 2.9 M<sub>L</sub> tremor has been such that I have been contacted by a considerable number of local residents, including several who have reported damage to their properties.

Following the bout of seismic activity stemming from PNR1z last year, I wrote to the Oil and Gas Authority to ask at which point it would be deemed that an 18 hour pause in activities was not satisfactory and the operator would be required to take further action. In response I was told the following;

*'There is no particular magnitude or seismic event that leads automatically to an indefinite pause' and that 'if an event is not in line with what is anticipated in the HFP, the OGA will require further analysis of the cause of the seismic activity before any injection activities could continue. If that analysis were to conclude that operations could not be conducted in a way that minimises disturbance and the risk to property, then a prolonged pause may be needed'.*

The regulations set out were done in such a matter to guarantee the safety and security of local residents and it was for the shale gas industry to show it could operate within them.

Cuadrilla Resources has continually failed to do so at its site on Preston New Road and it is clear that a pause in their activities is simply not good enough.

Throughout this period of exploratory hydraulic fracturing it has become abundantly clear that the Fylde Coast is not suitable for the shale gas industry and I am now calling for a full cessation of hydraulic fracturing on the Fylde Coast.

Yours sincerely,

**Mark Menzies MP**