

Keep It In The Ground

This motion is intended to develop party policy in the area of energy and the Zero Carbon Britain goal, including the unequivocal rejection of extreme fossil fuel extraction from shale, tar sands and deep ocean deposits. [Party Guidance](#)

11th–13th March 2016, York

- Drafting advice deadline (motions) 13.00 Wednesday 30th December 2015
MET
- Motions deadline 13.00 Wednesday 13th January 2016
- Drafting advice deadline 13.00 Tuesday 23rd February 2016 (amendments, emergency motions)
- Deadline for amendments to motions, 13.00 Tuesday 8th March 2016
emergency motions, topical issues, questions to reports

The motion is closed for comments (except for drafting advice from FE)

A substantially similar motion has now been passed in the following regions:

- Yorkshire and Humber
- West Midlands

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Policy Motion: Keep It In The Ground

Conference Notes that:

- A. Dangerous human-caused Climate Change is a scientific reality that is already damaging our society and threatens to unravel it entirely, and therefore represents an existential threat to future generations.
- B. The Liberal Democrats have led the way in developing and implementing policy to combat climate change.
- C. The current UK government is reversing much of the good work done by Lib Dem Ministers in the Coalition.
- D. Any constraint on fossil fuel supply will accelerate the supply and affordability of alternatives, driving the Green Economy.
- E. Peat and coal extraction are already banned or discouraged by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), while coal-bed methane extraction is encouraged.

Conference Recognises that:

- a. We will continue to need to burn fossil fuels only until the alternatives are available in sufficient quantity.
- b. These needs can be met by conventional extraction methods, with sufficient investment in renewables and efficiency.
- c. Unconventional forms of fossil fuel extraction have been shown to have a worse energy return for energy invested than conventional forms (excepting coal).
- d. The risks of these unconventional fossil fuel extraction methods have not been significantly reduced by regulation, and regulations do not sufficiently address their Greenhouse Gas emissions, in particular the danger of fugitive methane from fracking.
- a. Fossil fuel extraction for burning or release into the environment is inherently unsustainable.

Conference Reaffirms the Liberal Democrat commitment to:

- I. The goal of a Zero Carbon Britain by 2050
- II. The Fourth Carbon Budget, which commits the UK to a 50% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions (compared to 1990) by 2025
- III. Generational justice, where future generations are not disadvantaged by the actions of the current generation.
- IV. The decarbonisation of the electricity supply in the UK

Conference Calls on the UK Government to:

1. Legislate to modify the National Planning Policy Framework to introduce a total ban on new planning permissions for domestic extraction of fossil fuels using these unconventional methods:
 - a. Hydraulic fracturing of shale deposits, or 'Fracking'
 - b. Coal bed methane
 - c. Coal gasification
 - d. Deep ocean drilling

- e. Methane hydrate mining
- 2. Remove all direct and indirect incentives and subsidies that support any exploration for, extraction (conventional or unconventional), processing, or distribution of fossil fuels or the environmental release of them or their emissions.
- 3. Significantly expand financial and policy support for investment in, and research and development for, low carbon energy sources and technologies, including those that will reduce energy demand through conservation and efficiency gains.
- 4. Introduce progressive taxes on fossil fuel combustion, in proportion to their climate impact across their whole lifecycle, with expenditure, at least equal to the income raised, on measures to alleviate fuel poverty and to help those most in need to transition to a low carbon lifestyle.

Conference also calls on ALDE and the EU to:

- 5. Work together with members of other political parties and groups to form coalitions of the willing to move as rapidly as possible to a zero carbon economy across the EU.
- 6. Support all legal, liberal and diplomatic means to prevent the use of unconventional fossil fuel extraction methods in the list in (1) above, anywhere in the world, with the addition of:
 - a. Tar Sands
 - b. Arctic Ocean Drilling
- 7. Reduce and eventually eliminate the import of unconventionally extracted fossil fuels through the use of permissible environmental tariffs
- 8. Help all member states to achieve a fossil fuel free future by 2050
- 9. Eliminate the 25% EU tariff on imported solar panels

560 words

Explanatory notes

The feedback received from FCC was:

"I'm sorry to give you bad news but the FCC decided not to take your motion. As you know **there is existing policy** on this issue (debated in 2013), limited time at conference but your motion really did need to be much better drafted. If you resubmit, please, **be more definite** and feel free to use the drafting advice service (via Christian). For the FCC to facilitate a good debate, it **needs to be clear** what the debate is about – are you for or against fracking?"

"Maybe, particularly if you wanted to work with others, such as Duncan Brack and Neil Stockley, an excellent draft motion could be pulled together in time for Spring conference ..."

To meet these criticisms, the motion must be clearly different from the 'fracking with regulation' policy arrived at in 2013, so it must reject this with the argument that we cannot afford to dig it up.

Supporting Material

The supporting case for a motion on Keep It In The Ground - including "FRACKING", the Extraction of gas (or oil) by Hydraulic Fracturing and other unconventional fossil fuel extraction.

- The latest Federal Policy Paper on Energy (109, 2013) only mentions hydraulic fracturing for fossil fuels in the context of using gas for electricity generation.
- The corresponding Federal Conference Motion (Autumn 2013) again only mentions it in the section on decarbonising the electricity supply, but with the added amendment, does call for conditions which would apply to all fracking, (not just for fuel for electricity generation).

Anyone looking for our policy on fracking is very likely to miss it.

There is now a much greater interest in fracking, and more widespread opposition to it, than there was in the winter of 2012/3 when the policy group was working on policy paper 109.

At the December 2014 meeting of the Liberal Sustainability Network several NGOS and Lib Dems called for much stronger and clearer opposition to fracking. Given the increased public interest in fracking, it will be to the credit of the Party if it is discussed as soon as possible.

It is important that this issue be discussed in isolation from the nuclear energy debate and wider energy issues, as it deserves our specific focus. This motion builds on the existing energy policy with the specific aim of refining and progressing our move towards a zero carbon Britain.

Notes

- Fracking is a loose pop term without formal definition. Some current processes used in UK land wells “to give a bit of help to getting the oil out” could be described as “fracking”, although the term is usually applied the more aggressive high pressure processes in shale.
- Fracking in shale is not the only undesirable “unconventional” fossil fuel extraction method. There could, for example, be further applications for coalbed methane extraction and coalbed gasification.
- Fracking as a process is also used to develop geothermal energy resources, and it is not intended that this should be curtailed.
- The ethics of ‘keep it in the ground’:
<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/apr/13/keep-it-in-the-ground-why-this-is-a-matter-of-basic-ethics>
- The carbon impact of fracking:
<http://www.zo.utexas.edu/courses/THOC/Fracking.pdf>
- If there is no leakage of methane, gas produced by fracking could have a lower carbon footprint than liquefied methane imported by tanker from the middle-east, and it certainly has a lower carbon footprint than coal; hence while we continue to need fossil fuels, the principle objection is danger to the local environment (particularly to water supplies), not carbon footprint, unless there is a risk of major gas leakage. Experience elsewhere in the world, however, shows that this risk exists, and cannot be reduced by regulation.
- Councils, intimidated by the threat of costs being awarded against, are unlikely to oppose fracking applications, even when the environmental risk is significant: hence the need to protect Councils. There are already problems with councils having to accept fracking operators’ claims of safe operation because they cannot afford to employ experts to check them.
- Anthropogenic greenhouse gases arise primarily from both the burning of fossil fuels and their use as a hydrocarbon feedstock in agriculture, including the destruction of natural carbon sinks. The impact of cement/concrete and other sources is acknowledged, but not addressed by this motion.
- A map of existing licensing areas and exploratory drilling.
<http://frack-off.org.uk/extreme-energy-fullscreen/>
- One starting point for research into the issue is here:
<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/jan/07/much-worlds-fossil-fuel-reserve-must-stay-buried-prevent-climate-change-study-says>
- For how and why these extreme retrieval methods are worse than conventional methods, we look at the energy expended to retrieve the fuels:
<http://www.rsc.org/chemistryworld/2014/02/peak-oil-not-myth-fracking> "tight oil comes in at 4–5:1. Oil recovered from (ultra)deepwater drilling gives 4–7:1, heavy oil 3–5:1, and oil shale (kerogen) somewhere around 1.5–4:1." Based on that alone, the energy expended to retrieve the fossil fuels, these extraction methods all produce more emissions than conventional extraction methods.
- Legal issues and the planning process
http://www.leighday.co.uk/LeighDay/media/LeighDay/documents/Guides/Fracking-guide_June-2015.pdf

- The National Planning Policy Framework (to which all local plans must adhere). Both coal and peat extraction are specifically discouraged, while coalbed methane is encouraged:
 - https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf
 - **p33:** “so far as practicable, take account of the contribution that substitute or secondary and recycled materials and minerals waste would make to the supply of materials, before considering extraction of primary materials, whilst aiming to source minerals supplies indigenously; “ **This requires energy conservation to take priority over new energy sources.**
 - **p33:** “set out environmental criteria, in line with the policies in this Framework, against which planning applications will be assessed so as to ensure that permitted operations do not have unacceptable adverse impacts on the natural and historic environment or human health, including from noise, dust, visual intrusion, traffic, tip- and quarry-slope stability, differential settlement of quarry backfill, mining subsidence, increased flood risk, impacts on the flow and quantity of surface and groundwater and migration of contamination from the site; and take into account the cumulative effects of multiple impacts from individual sites and/or a number of sites in a locality;”
 - **p36:** “encourage capture and use of methane from coal mines in active and abandoned coalfield areas”
 - **p37/8:** “Local planning authorities should set out the strategic priorities for the area in the Local Plan. This should include strategic policies to deliver: climate change mitigation and adaptation”
- WTO rules on environmental tariffs:
 - https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/envir_e/envt_rules_exceptions_e.htm
 - GATT Article XX on General Exceptions lays out a number of specific instances in which WTO members may be exempted from GATT rules. Two exceptions are of particular relevance to the protection of the environment: paragraphs (b) and (g) of Article XX. Pursuant to these two paragraphs, WTO members may adopt policy measures that are inconsistent with GATT disciplines, but necessary to protect human, animal or plant life or health (paragraph (b)), or relating to the conservation of exhaustible natural resources (paragraph (g)).
- 25% EU Tarrif on solar panels:
 - <http://www.policyconnect.org.uk/cc/news/renewable-energy-association-calls-eu-drop-tariffs-chinese-solar-modules>
 - “Chinese imports to the EU have been subject to ‘anti-dumping’ tariffs since December 2013, requiring a minimum price of €0.56 per watt and an annual import quota of 7GW.”

Historical Note

The previously submitted motions are provided for additional background information

SJB Fracking 2 28 June 2015 Short (500 word)

Policy Motion on Fracking for September 2015

“FRACKING”, the Extraction of Gas or Oil by Hydraulic Fracturing, and other unconventional fossil fuel extraction.

A Conference notes that:-

- i) rapid climate change, is a major disrupter of agriculture and a threat to the world economy, with the potential to trigger unprecedented migrations and strife;
- ii) the majority of known fossil fuel reserves will have to remain unburnt if we are to restrict global warming to 2°C this century;
- iii) we will continue to need fossil fuels in the medium term, and conventional natural gas is a lower carbon, and cleaner, source of energy than coal or oil;
- iv) fracked natural gas can have additional environmental burdens such as the; large quantities of water used on the site, need to remove and treat of large quantities of contaminated water, possibility of the leakage of large quantities of methane (a powerful 'greenhouse' gas) into to the atmosphere, possible leakage of chemical releasing agents and other pollutants into aquifers, possible high volumes of tanker traffic on minor roads;
- v) large numbers of geologists and suitably trained planning officers, would be needed to supervise the 1,000 plus exploratory wells required to establish a viable 'fracking' industry.
- vi) fossil hydrocarbons can be used as chemical industry feedstock, as well as a fuel.

B Conference recommends that:-

only the fossil fuel reserves that yield the highest usable energy output per CO₂ equivalent greenhouse gas emissions and present the lowest risk of contamination of water supplies or other environmental degradation, should be exploited;

1. no government promotion or incentives should be given for fossil fuels exploration or extraction.
2. hydraulic fracturing for oil, for use as a fuel, should be banned;
3. the presumption should be against granting permission for hydraulic fracturing for gas, or other unconventional fossil fuel extraction, unless a panel of independent experts, appointed by the appropriate tier of government, but paid for by the applicant, concludes that, for that proposal:-
 - a) the process imposes no significant risk of depleting local water supplies or of contamination of the public water supply by failure, accident or natural event;
 - b) there is no significant risk of initiating leakage of methane and, if for fuel use, the CO₂ equivalent emission of greenhouse

gases, per unit of end user useful energy supplied, would not be significantly greater than for alternative gas supplies;
c) there is no significant risk to stability of land bearing buildings or essential structures, save by consent of their owners;
d) valued landscapes are not significantly damaged;

4. the decision not to allow hydraulic fracturing, by the appropriate local authority should not be overturned without a full public enquiry;
5. if an appropriate local authority's decision to refuse permission for fracking is successfully challenged, the local authority should not be liable for the applicant's costs or for the costs of any project delays;
6. There should be adequate long term independent/government inspection of extraction, financed by the industry.

C Conference calls upon Liberal Democrat MPs, Peers and Councillors to:-
do all possible

- I. to prevent Ministers from unfairly supporting and indemnifying fracking;
- II. to oppose any moves by DEFRA to allow exploratory wells without environmental assessment based, prior approval;
- III. and to work to achieve legislation, regulations and planning decisions that meet the above recommendations.

525 words

SJB Fracking 4 28 June 2015 700 word

Policy Motion on Fracking for September 2015

“FRACKING”, the Extraction of Gas or Oil by Hydraulic Fracturing, and other unconventional fossil fuel extraction.

A Conference:-

- i) notes that rapid climate change is a major disrupter of agriculture and a threat to the world economy, with the potential to trigger unprecedented mass economic migrations and consequent strife;
- ii) supports efforts to restrict this century's global temperature rise to 1.5°C;
- iii) notes the paper by McGlade & Ekins [Nature 517, 187-190 doi:10.1038/nature 14016 (Jan 2015)], reinforcing expert opinion indicating that the majority of known fossil fuel reserves will have to remain unburnt if we are to restrict global warming to 2°C this century;
- iv) notes the November 2014 statement, by the International Energy Agency, that oil, coal and gas receive more than four times more in incentives, than the £80 billion paid in incentives for wind, solar, biofuels and other renewable energy sources.. B Conference further notes that:
 - v) the UK will continue to need fossil fuels in the medium term;
 - vi) compared to coal and oil, conventional natural gas is a cleaner source of energy, with a much lower carbon intensity.
 - vii) natural gas from hydraulically fractured shale ('fracked gas') has additional environmental burdens such as:
 - a. the large quantities of water that have to be supplied to the sites,
 - b. the need to remove and treat of large quantities of contaminated water from the sites,
 - c. the possibility of the leakage of methane into to the atmosphere,
 - d. possible leakage into nearby aquifers of chemical releasing agents and other pollutants,
 - e. for many sites, a high volume of tanker traffic on minor roads;
 - viii) there is almost certainly a lack of adequate numbers of geologists and suitably trained planning officers, to supervise the 1,000 plus exploratory wells required to establish a viable 'fracking' industry.
 - ix) as well as being used as fuel, fossil hydrocarbons can be used as feedstock for the production of polymers (in which carbon is bound in chains, rather than released as CO₂).

C Conference recommends that:-

1. only the fossil fuel reserves that yield the highest usable energy output per CO₂ equivalent greenhouse gas emissions (from extraction to final use) and present the lowest risk of contamination of water supplies or other degradation of the environment, should be exploited;
2. no government promotion or incentives of any kind should be given for exploration for, or extraction of, fossil fuels, or for the equipment for use in such activities worldwide;
3. hydraulic fracturing for oil, for use as a fuel, should be banned;
4. the presumption should be against granting permission for hydraulic fracturing for gas (or other unconventional fossil fuels extraction), under land, unless a panel of independent experts, approved by an independent

scientific body such as the Royal Society, appointed by the appropriate tier of government, but paid for by the applicant, conclude that, for that proposal:-

- e) the process imposes no significant risk of depleting local water supplies or of contamination of the public water supply by failure, accident or natural event;
- f) there is no significant risk of initiating immediate or long term leakage of methane and, if the gas is for fuel use, the CO₂ equivalent emission of greenhouse gases (including methane and CO₂ emissions from extraction to end use), per unit of end user useful energy supplied, would not be significantly greater than for alternative available gas supplies;
- g) there is no significant risk to stability of land bearing buildings or essential structures, save by consent of their owners;
- h) valued landscapes and are not significantly damaged;

5. a decision by the appropriate local authority, not to allow hydraulic fracturing or other fossil fuel extraction, should not be overturned without a full public enquiry;

6. if an appropriate local authority's decision to refuse permission, for fossil fuel extraction, is successfully challenged, the local authority should not be liable for the applicant's costs in challenging the its decision or for the costs of any project delays;

7. There should be adequate long term independent/government inspection of extraction and monitoring financed by the individual operator or the industry.

D Conference calls upon Liberal Democrat MPs, Peers and Councillors to:-

- I. do all legally possible to prevent Ministers from unfairly supporting and indemnifying fracking;
- II. to oppose any moves by DEFRA to allow exploratory wells without prior environmental assessment based approval;
- III. and to work to achieve legislation, regulation and planning decisions that meet the above recommendations

721 words