Reference WSCC/045/20

With reference to the application of Angus Energy to carry out hydraulic acidization at Balcombe, West Sussex.

Dear Councillors

I wrote to you opposing the application of Caudrilla to carry out hydraulic acidization at Balcombe, and I have not changed my mind since then regarding my concerns and in fact have additional concerns. My initial concerns were about air pollution from the process of hydraulic acidization such as hydrocarbons and diesel emissions from traffic causing 'ozone smog' and the dust containing silica which causes serious lung disease that can disable and even cause death to the workers. Another problem that has been highlighted since then is that of methane release especially when the wells are finished with. While the pollution maybe viewed as a problem for West Sussex and I live in East Sussex ambient air pollution is transboundary which is why air pollution and methane are greenhouse gases and lead to climate change.

I have another concern, and that is in the United States a number of companies have filed for bankruptcy.

Over the last few years, the US has been the major nation to produce oil and gas from fracking but the New York Times reported (12 July, 2020) that "Oil and gas companies are hurtling toward bankruptcy raising fears that wells will be left leaking planet warming pollutants with clean up left to tax payers". They add that Rysted Energy analysts expect 250 oil and gas companies file for bankruptcy protection and there are many more oil and gas companies going bankrupt while the executers are paying themselves before filing bankruptcy. It is reported that Texas oil producer MDC Energy filed for bankruptcy eight months ago – and at the time of writing a tank of one of its wells is leaking methane whereby 'visible gases were still spewing in to the air a week later'. Already there are 3m abandoned oil and gas mines across the US with 2m releasing methane equivalent of annual emissions from 1.5m cars. Methane pound for pound can warm the planet more than 80 times as much as carbon dioxide over a twenty-year period. Robert Schuwerk, executive director for North America Carbon Tracker comments "And companies haven't been setting aside the money because they would rather spend the money on drilling a new well".

A recent report by Carbon Tracker estimated that the cost to plug a typical shale well is close to $300,000 — far higher than the estimates used by companies, regulators and financial analysts — because the wells are far deeper than conventional ones.

Furthermore the Trump administration, the report warns, is finalising a plan that would eliminate requirement that oil and gas companies install technology to detect and fix methane leaks from oil and gas facilities and "By the federal government's own calculations, the rollback would increase methane emissions by 370,000 tons through 2025, equivalent to what it would take to power more than a million homes for a year. See https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/12/climate/oil-fracking-bankruptcy-methane-executive-pay.html

You will be aware that the Government has committed to reducing carbon emissions to zero by 2050. Also, the Paris Agreement's COP26 meeting will be held in Glasgow in November 2021. Further, Climate Home News reports that 'fossil fuel money is not welcome to help run next year's COP26 climate talks in Glasgow as UK Government seeks sponsors with net zero emissions plans. See https://www.climatechangenews.com/2020/08/18/big-oil-need-not-apply-uk-raises-bar-un-climate-summit-sponsorship/

While this is the U.S the impact of COVID-19 has caused problems for the oil and gas industry in the UK as BP and Shell are reported to have written off billions in assets citing COVID-19 and climate change. See https://insideclimatenews.org/news/01072020/bp-shell-coronavirus-climate-change

As you will realize I object to Angus Energy and hope you will consider my concerns when making your decision.

Yours faithfully

Jennifer Howells.

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