

To: First Minister firstminister@gov.scot

Subject: Please end the fracking story with a full legal ban

Dear First Minister

Last year you told Parliament 'fracking is being banned in Scotland, end of story'. But only months later what your Energy Minister Paul Wheelhouse described as an 'effective ban' on fracking was exposed in court as having no legal force.

I understand your Government is now moving into the final stages of its decision making process on fracking, with a Strategic Environmental Assessment and partial Business and Regulatory Impact Assessment of the preferred policy position of no support for fracking out for consultation, and a final decision expected in the new year. You and your Government have won praise from around the world for taking a stand against fracking, and I want to thank you for taking a strong personal interest and stance on the issue.

However, the time has come to draw a line under the issue for good by legislating to prohibit fracking. Without legislation any policy position of no support for fracking could be torn up by a future Scottish Government with no recourse to Parliament or the will of the people. Putting the policy position into the National Planning Framework, as your Government has already agreed to do, will make little difference since Parliament has no power to vote down any changes to it.

With powers over onshore oil and gas licensing having transferred to Holyrood earlier this year, it is clear that the devolved Government can act to ban fracking.

With over 60,000 people calling for a ban on fracking - the largest number of people ever to express a single opinion to an official Scottish Government consultation – there is clearly a strong mandate to do so.

Communities across Scotland who have been fighting the industry for 7 years, particularly in the central belt frontlines where it is proposed, deserve no less than full legal protection from this harmful industry. The severity of the climate crisis demands it.

A ban should cover all forms of unconventional oil and gas extraction, with no new licenses issued and existing licenses revoked. The French Government did this in 2012 and no legal challenges against that ban have been successful. Many other governments at national, regional and local level have since followed suit.

It's time for Scotland to do the same, and put an end to the story with a full legal ban on fracking.

I understand that you cannot act to ban fracking until the end of the SEA process, but I look forward to an announcement that your Government will legislate in the New Year.

22 emails addressed to the First Minister containing this text were received between the dates of 01/01/19 and 31/03/19.