



## Introduction

38 Degrees members funded analysis into the potential impacts of allowing fracking in Scotland. It covered scientific research and the views of industry experts. This report contends that the risks of fracking to our vital tourism industry could far outweigh any benefits.

## Fracking's impact

- Fracking is a relatively new technology, where thousands of gallons of water, sand and toxic chemicals are pumped into the ground to fracture or "frack" natural shale deposits, in order to release the gas trapped in the rock.
- Fracking increases truck traffic, which then increases air pollution and extra noise. A report prepared for the Scottish Government estimated each fracking well pad could require 190 truck journeys per week for around two years.
- According to industry body UK Onshore Oil and Gas (UKOOG), fracking involves erecting drilling rigs. At 40 meters (125 feet) tall, they are roughly the height of an 11-storey building. Cement fracking pads could then mark each area with gas wells, creating a patchwork of concrete, with the sound of motors running to extract gas 24 hours per day in the pre-production phase. (UKOOG)
- Many of the chemicals used in fracking are hazardous to human health (Bergmann et al., 2014, in a Health Protection Scotland report).
- A report from Health Protection Scotland, which included a review of much of the available research on the impact of fracking, found that there was sufficient evidence that a number of airborne and waterborne environmental hazards could be likely to occur as a result of fracking operations. Citing various research papers, Health Protection Scotland found several routes toxic chemicals from fracking could enter the drinking-water supply. Health Protection Scotland concluded: "Pollutants may enter the drinking-water supply through spillages, runoffs from drilling sites or when well casing integrity is compromised allowing leaks through underground fissures in the rock formations."
- Another study discussed the impact on soil: "Pollutants, such as benzene, toluene, other petroleum hydrocarbons, barium, and other metals that may occur in drilling fluids, can be absorbed in or absorbed to soil, creating a residue that will leach with rain and/or snowmelt."

## Importance of tourism to Scotland's economy

- 40% of tourists to Scotland come to enjoy its pristine, natural beauty, and they spend nearly £5bn here each year. (SNH) Any damage to Scotland's reputation as a clean, beautiful and unpolluted place would have an impact on tourism, and we know that fracking is certain to have a negative impact on our environment.
- The Central Belt - where fracking licenses are likely to be granted first if fracking is allowed - contains the largest number of tourism jobs in Scotland. (VisitScotland 2013) Any impact on tourism because of perceived or actual environmental damage from fracking could impact jobs in the Central Belt.
- A Deloitte report from 2013 forecast a growth in Scotland's tourism industry from its current worth £12bn per year to £23.1bn by 2025 – or 11.5% of Scotland's GDP, supporting around 350,000 jobs. (VisitScotland 2013) It's estimated that fracking could be worth £50m per year and support, at the most, for a limited time (Page 6), an estimated 1,400 Scottish jobs.
- Water plays a key role in Scotland's economy, including whisky, recreation and agriculture and is critically important to the health of the Scottish environment. (British Geological Survey)
- Stirling Castle welcomed 482,000 visitors in 2016. Stirling sits in Scotland's proposed 'fracking belt', the area which could see 11-storey 'drill rigs' erected in it.
- Falkirk has successfully promoted itself as a major tourist destination and increased its tourism revenue 45% since 2009, to £106m in 2015. Tourism-related jobs in the area have risen 14% and continue to rise, and in 2015 the Falkirk Wheel was the third most visited paid tourist attraction in Scotland. However, Falkirk sits on top of one of the areas of the Central Belt most likely to see fracking take place, if the Scottish Government decides to allow it. As with Stirling, the noise, traffic, water and air pollution which could result from local fracking activity could have a negative impact on Falkirk's reputation as a place to visit.

## Tourism professionals concerned

- **Elly Douglas-Hamilton of Archerfield Walled Garden**, which includes a restaurant, kitchen garden and microbrewery, said: "We run a local visitor attraction and employ over 50 people. We take our custodianship of the land very seriously and our brand is built on the natural beauty and tranquillity of the East Lothian countryside. We also own 140 hectares of farmland, where we grow crops that contribute to our revenue. The possibility that fracking might take place nearby creates huge uncertainty and potential disruption to our community as well as for those who visit. We need to know that fracking would not harm our business, our home or our community. However, no one is able to say with any certainty that it won't have negative environmental and social impact. For us, the benefits remain unclear as we plan for the future of our

business and our community in East Lothian.”

- **Hamish Campbell, Operations Manager, MacBackpackers**, said: “Guests come from all over the world to enjoy our award-winning tours, experiencing Scotland’s natural beauty and learning about its history, which is intertwined with its landscape. We are committed to sustainable tourism and to minimising our own impact on the environment where we can. So we are concerned that the negative impact fracking has had on the environment in other countries may be coming to Scotland. Scotland has a reputation for clean air, water and beautiful natural landscapes so the impact of fracking could certainly have a negative knock-on effect on tourism. Allowing fracking here is a gamble for anyone involved in the tourism sector.”