



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Statement on Fracking

The Government is rightly taking action to accelerate domestic energy supply, increase our energy resilience and to make the UK an energy exporter by 2040.

The UK gas market is one of the most liquid and developed in the world and provides security through diversity of supply. Most of the gas supply to the UK comes from domestic production and imports from reliable suppliers like Norway. Although we receive some Liquefied Natural Gas from Russia, we are in no way dependent – less than four per cent was sourced from Russia in 2020. While this is a small proportion of our supply, I know that the Government is exploring options to end this altogether.

In a bid to boost long-term energy independence, security and prosperity, the Government has launched its Energy Security Strategy, which sets out how Britain will accelerate the deployment of wind, nuclear, solar and hydrogen power, while supporting the production of domestic oil and gas in the nearer term. It is important to recognise that while we transition to green energy, producing gas in the UK has a lower carbon footprint than importing it from abroad. Together, these measures will be central to weaning Britain off expensive fossil fuels, which are subject to uncontrollable and volatile prices, and will provide both cleaner and more affordable energy.

While the UK is driving down demand for fossil fuels on the path to delivering net zero, it is important to recognise that there will continue to be ongoing demand for oil and gas while we transition to low carbon energy. Producing gas in the UK has a lower carbon footprint than importing it from abroad. It is therefore right that the Government explores all the available options to accelerate domestic energy supply, whilst continuing the transition to low carbon energy.

As part of measures to accelerate the UK's domestic energy supply, the moratorium on UK shale gas production has been lifted. This will enable developers to seek planning permission where there is local support. The Prime Minister was clear that fracking would only go ahead if there was consent from local communities.

Let me be clear, I agree with her and believe shale gas exploration should only proceed with wholehearted local support and as long as it is safe and environmentally responsible to the nearby communities. I am aware of the long term strong feelings are held across Mid Sussex on this issue, and I know the majority of my constituents do not support fracking locally and I have already been on the record with this ([Blow to fracking in England as only five of 138 MPs in target areas voice support | Fracking | The Guardian](#), published 15th March 2022)

I therefore do not personally support shale gas exploration in Balcombe, and I have previously written on behalf, and in support, of my deeply worried constituents in nearby Cuckfield regarding planning matters at a previously controversial site. This site is just outside of my constituency but in the Mid Sussex district. It is my aim to always try to keep Mid Sussex special and ensure we are protecting our wonderful area, whilst balancing and reflecting the changing needs and wants of my constituents.

We need to find a way to protect ourselves from ongoing price spikes in the future. It is my view that for our area, we should be concentrating our efforts on a move towards renewables, which are well supported as cleaner, cheaper, home-grown energy, and I am glad to see the Government is delivering on this. However, I do recognise other communities and situations mean that exploring shale gas is something that those communities would wish to pursue and that is a matter for them.