



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FEBRUARY 27 2019, 12:01AM, THE TIMES

EFFECT OF FRACKING ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Sir, Recently Ineos and Cuadrilla, which both have significant interests in the hydraulic fracturing of shale gas, have demanded that the “traffic light” system that monitors seismicity at fracking well sites should be relaxed to allow larger earthquakes (reports, Feb 5 & 7). Following this a group of geoscientists signed a letter to *The Times* (Feb 9) in support of this demand.

This month the UK Institute of Public Policy Research reported that as a result of climate change “a new, highly complex and destabilised ‘domain of risk’ is emerging, which includes the risk of the collapse of key social and economic systems, at local and potentially even global levels”.

Climate change is already causing an increase in extreme weather events and driving accelerated melting of the polar ice sheets and Himalayan glaciers. Its primary causes are carbon dioxide emissions from the extraction and burning of fossil fuels and rising methane emissions from fossil fuel extraction — particularly fracking. Meanwhile a new era of cheap, clean renewable energy and storage is arriving, with volumes doubling every two to three years. Is it not time that our leaders and scientific community withdrew their support for fracking and engaged in the challenge of transforming our society to meet this existential challenge?

Nick Cowern, Emeritus Professor, School of Engineering, Newcastle University; Professor Peter Strachan, Aberdeen Business School, Robert Gordon University; Keith Barnham, Emeritus Professor, Dept. of Physics, Imperial College, London; Professor Andrew Blowers, The Open University; Dr Adam Broinowski, Visiting Research Fellow, Australian National University; Dr Matthew Cotton, Senior Lecturer, Dept. of Environment and Geography, University of York; Professor Richard Cowell, School of Geography and Planning, Cardiff University; Professor Mark Diesendorf, University of New South Wales; Dr Paul Dorfman, The Energy Institute, University College London; Professor Geraint Ellis, School of Natural and Built Environment, Queen’s University Belfast; Dr Ian Fairlie, Scientific consultant, UK; Denis Hall, Emeritus Professor, Heriot Watt University; Professor Stuart Haszeldine, FRSE, School of GeoSciences, University of Edinburgh; Robert W Howarth, Professor of Ecology and Environmental Biology, Cornell University; Professor Mark Z Jacobson, School of Earth, Energy and Environmental Sciences, Stanford University; Dr Phil Johnstone, Research Fellow, Science Policy Research Unit, University of Sussex; Professor Calvin Jones, Professor of Economics, Cardiff Business School; Dr Peter Kalmus, Associate Project Scientist, Joint Institute for Regional Earth System Science & Engineering, University of California, Los Angeles; Dr Dominic Kelly, Dept. of Politics and International Studies, Warwick University; Dr Jeremy Leggett, social entrepreneur and writer, director at Solarcentury; Dr David Lowry, Institute for Resource and Security Studies, Cambridge, Massachusetts; Professor Bill McGuire, Professor Emeritus of Geophysical and Climate Hazards, University College London; Professor Majia H Nadesan, Risk Innovation Fellow, Arizona State University; Sir Jonathon Porritt, environmentalist and writer; William Powrie, Professor of Geotechnical Engineering, Southampton University; Andrew Simms, Research Associate, Centre for Global Political Economy, University of Sussex; David Smythe, Emeritus Professor of Geophysics, University of Glasgow; Dr Matt Watson, Senior Lecturer in Human Geography, University of Sheffield; Professor Andrew Watterson, Public Health and Population Health Research Group, University of Stirling.