

Ban on fracking to be lifted as part of Liz Truss's energy plan

Fracking was banned in England in 2019 after new research raised fresh fears over the risk of earthquakes.

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Liz Truss has announced the ban on fracking will be lifted as part of plans to accelerate the UK's domestic energy supply.

fracking and get gas flowing in as soon as six months.

Ms Truss said she was "setting a new ambition for our country".

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"Far from being dependent on the global energy market and the actions of malign actors, we will make sure that the UK is a net energy exporter by 2040," she said.

Fracking is a technique for recovering gas and oil from shale rock by drilling into the earth.

It [was banned in England in 2019](#) after new research raised fresh fears over the risk of earthquakes.

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The Conservatives' manifesto said the party would not support fracking "unless the science shows categorically that it can be done safely".

Ms Truss said it would only be allowed "where there is local support for it".

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Georgia Whitaker, an oil and gas campaigner for Greenpeace UK, said there has been no change to the science since that pledge was made three years ago.

The activist said that before the ban was introduced, the industry had 10 years of experimenting with fracking but this "produced no energy for the UK".

She said all it achieved was "two holes in a muddy field, traffic, noise, earthquakes and enormous controversy".

She added: "Communities who have this nonsense inflicted on them in the name of an out-of-date ideology will be wondering who their elected representatives are really representing."



Prime Minister Liz Truss sets out her energy plan

Why is fracking controversial?

Fracking has been mired in controversy since it hit the headlines in 2011 for causing two minor earthquakes in Lancashire.

Environmentalists have warned that pursuing new sources of gas - a fossil fuel - is not compatible with efforts to tackle climate change, and

the focus should be on developing cleaner sources of energy such as renewables.

TRUSS'S ENERGY PLAN 'WILL BE FRAUGHT WITH DIFFICULTIES'



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In the name of energy security, Liz Truss has ushered in a new era of fossil fuel exploration and extraction in the UK.

But her chosen path will be fraught with difficulties.

Fracking companies may rush to apply for drilling permits, but they will face stiff opposition from local communities unwilling to tolerate the threat of earthquakes, even if they are offered cheaper gas in return, and from NGOs, a number of which I understand are already considering options for a legal challenge.

And while the Bowland shale reserve is huge, we have no way of knowing how much recoverable gas is down there until drilling begins.

The push for more North Sea drilling is also complicated. We've extracted most of the gas in what is already a declining basin.

Of the 40 or so new fields up for final approval to begin drilling within the next three years, most are oil, 80% of which is exported anyway.

And if Ms Truss is talking about granting more initial licences in the North Sea, it could be decades before actual production begins in those fields.

The push for nuclear is equally expensive and long term.

Her commitment to accelerating progress on clean technologies and renewable energy, like wind, solar, hydrogen and carbon capture and storage, will have gone some way to reassure both climate change campaigners and the British public that she has not lost sight of the importance of getting off fossil fuels altogether.

But although she has publicly backed the UK's net zero carbon emissions by 2050 pledge, she also announced a review of the target to make sure it is pro-growth and pro-business.

That was straight out of the playbook of a group of Conservative MPs calling themselves the Net Zero Scrutiny Group and who are pushing for a referendum on the policy.

And it's why, along with an unashamed push for more domestic oil and gas, Ms Truss's new energy strategy has sent a shudder through campaigners and politicians committed to tackling climate change.

The government is under pressure to increase domestic energy production because of the war in Ukraine, which has sent the cost of energy soaring.

In March Kwasi Kwarteng, the new chancellor who was business secretary at the time, argued that those calling for the return of fracking "misunderstand the situation we find ourselves in".

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Mr Kwarteng said it would take a decade to extract sufficient volumes and would have a negative impact on communities while failing to lower energy bills.

He wrote in the Mail on Sunday: "With the best will in the world, private companies are not going to sell the shale gas they produce to UK consumers below the market price. They are not charities, after all."



The shadow climate change secretary says the government is 'setting its face against renewables'

Ed Miliband, the former Labour leader and shadow climate minister, said lifting the moratorium was "another case of ideology trumping common sense".

He told Sky News that the price of fracked gas extracted in the UK would still cost the same as imported gas because it is sold on the international market and "that is nine times the current price of renewables".

"There's only one way out of being in the grip of the geopolitics of Putin and others and that is a clean energy sprint," he said.

"I'm afraid the government seems to be setting its face against that."

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As well as lifting the ban on fracking, Ms Truss pledged to launch a new licensing round for oil licences while speeding up the deployment of clean and renewable technologies.

She said securing energy supply is vital to growth and prosperity "yet it has been ignored for too long".

She also revealed that she would [shield households from rising costs by freezing energy bills](#) at £2,500 for the next two years.

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