

## **Initial petition response**

This Government is committed to ending new onshore oil and gas licensing in England. We are aware of local concerns around low volume hydraulic fracturing and are keeping regulation under review.

This Government is committed to ending new onshore oil and gas licensing in England. This will help make Britain a clean energy superpower to protect current and future generations.

On 1 October the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero announced legislation to end new onshore oil and gas licensing in England, including new licences that could be used for high volume hydraulic fracturing for shale gas (commonly known as “fracking”).

There is an effective moratorium on high volume hydraulic fracturing for shale gas (“associated hydraulic fracturing” as defined by the Petroleum Act 1998) in England, and this will continue to apply to existing licences. This is in place because of concerns around prediction and management of induced seismicity from this type of hydraulic fracturing. There are similar restrictions in place across other parts of the UK.

Low volume hydraulic fracturing activities, including for example “proppant squeezes”, take place at lower volumes than the thresholds for “associated hydraulic fracturing” and in a variety of geological contexts. These activities are therefore not currently in scope of the effective moratorium in England.

Low volume hydraulic fracturing activities take place in the context of conventional oil and gas operations and can be used for a variety of purposes. They require a range of permissions and consents before they can be undertaken. This includes planning permission from the relevant local planning authority, and other necessary permits and consents from the North Sea Transition Authority, Environment Agency, and the Health and Safety Executive. This system ensures operations meet the safety and environmental standards and obligations set out in law – and activities will only be approved on that basis.

We are aware of local concerns raised by the petition around low volume hydraulic fracturing and are keeping regulation under review.

Department for Energy Security and Net Zero

This response was given on 11 November 2025. The Petitions Committee then requested a revised response, that more directly addressed the request of the petition.