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EU Fracking Vote

Press release from SNP MEP Alyn Smith

SNP Member of the European Parliament's Energy Committee **Alyn Smith** has today (Wednesday) expressed his concerns on two votes in the European Parliament which seek to regulate the controversial practice of 'fracking', despite the fact that the EU has no direct competence over energy policy.

He has welcomed a vote defeating a call for an immediate moratorium across the EU. The reports have no legislative effect but are important indicators of the development of the Parliament's attitude to fracking. Alyn is firmly of the view that the awarding of licenses for fracking should remain entirely a responsibility of the Member States.

The vote to defeat the moratorium passed by 391 votes to 262, though the final vote, on the report from the Environment Committee drafted by Polish MEP Sonik, was approved by 562 votes to 86. Alyn abstained on the grounds that much of the report opened the door to increased EU involvement in what should remain a Member State competence. The other report from the Energy Committee drafted by MEP Tzavella and was approved by 492 votes to 129, with Alyn voting against on the grounds that the report was too much in favour of fracking when the risks of the technology remain unquantified.

Speaking after the vote Alyn said:

"As ever, there were parts of these reports to like, parts to be more wary of, but the SNP's North Star, as ever, is that the exploitation of energy resources is not a matter for the EU, and should remain with the national authorities.

"Fracking is a potentially interesting technology, but there remain real question marks over how safe it is, what impacts it has on the environment and, indeed, what sort of resource we actually have, as opposed to hypothetical projections. Fracking may well have a role to play in the EU's energy future but the jury is still very firmly out, and it should in any event be the national authorities who decide what is best for them.

"Likewise, much of the wording in the reports was ambiguous, with a number of vague statements that add little and could create confusion over who is actually responsible for what. On balance, I couldn't support either report."

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