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Mr Stephen Hamilton,
Principal Planning Officer
Strategic Planning Division
Millennium House
17-25 Great Victoria Street
Belfast BT2 7BN

Application ref: E/2013/0093/F for temporary works of drilling exploratory borehole to approx 2700m depth to investigate underground strata for hydrocarbon exploration under DETI license PL3/10

Dear Mr Hamilton,

I wish to object to planning permission being granted for this application on the following grounds:

1. Public Health. The proposed borehole is far too close to people's homes. According to the latest Ordnance Survey map, there are approximately 43 households within an 800m radius of the site. Several of those homes are within a 100m radius of the site! Current research indicates that there are significant adverse health impacts on those living within an 800 metre (½ mile) radius of an oil and or gas well, with children, the sick and the elderly being most vulnerable. Setback or buffer zones of 2km are being implemented in other countries to mitigate the public health risk of on-shore oil and gas exploration. We cannot do less for our citizens.

2. Public Misinformation. Rathlin Energy have misled the local community about their intentions. They stated at their public meetings in June 2013 and in their publicly available documents, that they were primarily interested in seeking conventional oil reserves and had no intention of carrying out Hydraulic Fracturing at the Ballinlea Site. Having been required to supply further information within this planning process, RE have now stated in their planning submission, that, as part of this immediate exploration process, they do in fact intend to conduct several Hydraulic Fracturing processes, as a means of testing both the supply and viability of the Oil & Gas at Ballinlea 2 Drill Site within the Shale and Sandstone layers.

3. Damage to Landscape and Local Environment. The percentage of drilling wells that fail within the first year alone is reported by the oil and gas industry itself as more than 6%. This failure rate increases to between 30%-50% within fifty years. This creates a 75% statistical probability that one of the two wells at Ballinlea will leak in the future, risking the escape of thousands of gallons of hazardous and toxic chemicals and pollutants into the surrounding landscape and watercourses such as the rivers Bush. The proposed development is in close proximity to both the Causeway Coast and the Antrim Coast and Glens AONB's and is also within 1 km of Prolusk ASSI. The protected vegetation of the ASSI could potentially be affected by the inevitable air pollution during operation of the site.

4. Damage to the Local Economy - Tourism and Agriculture. This proposed well is to be the first of many in the License area. The risk to tourism and agriculture, key areas of the local economy, is unacceptable. In the Moyle district alone, tourism generates approximately £30million pounds per annum. The north coast area is renowned for its scenic beauty, but tourists will not wish to visit an area which has been industrialised and contaminated. Concern over the pollution of air and water courses, as a result of drilling also poses a substantial threat to the domestic and export markets for local agricultural produce. Both tourism and agriculture will suffer as this oil/ gas exploration drive continues.

Given the public health, environmental and economic dangers it will cause, I urge you to reject this planning application.

Signed:

Date: April 2014