

Carl Sargeant AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Cyfoeth Naturiol
Minister for Natural Resources



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-648
Ein cyf/Our ref CS/01512/15

Eluned Parrott AM
Assembly Member for South Wales Central
National Assembly for Wales
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

eluned.parrott@assembly.wales

3rd November 2015

Dear Eluned Parrott AM

During First Minister's Questions last week you raised a query about test drilling and requested that I bring forward a new technical advice note to assist local planning authorities in resisting planning applications for exploratory boreholes. The First Minister has asked me to provide some assurances about the position we have adopted.

With regard to boreholes and test drilling it is important to recognise that they do not necessarily involve unconventional techniques. Drilling boreholes to take core samples is a routine part of engineering works and is undertaken for a wide variety of different reasons, for example, ground investigation is regularly undertaken during the construction of the built environment and boreholes provide essential information. Therefore, as boreholes have been drilled for a long time with no long lasting environmental consequences and they are not an unconventional extraction technique I do not consider that the Direction should be applied to them.

Current national planning policy identifies the environmental impacts that must be addressed to ensure that any proposed development does not impact adversely on the environment, communities or wider society. The policy clarification letter I issued in July 2014 draws attention to, and reiterates, these considerations. Just because it has been appropriate to grant planning permission to explore for the resource it does not follow that it would necessarily be appropriate to allow commercial extraction and hydraulic fracturing in

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

English Enquiry Line 0300 0603300
Llinell Ymholiadau Cymraeg 0300 0604400
Correspondence: Carl.Sargeant@wales.gsi.gov.uk

*Wedi'i argraffu ar bapur wedi'i ailgylchu (100%)
recycled paper*

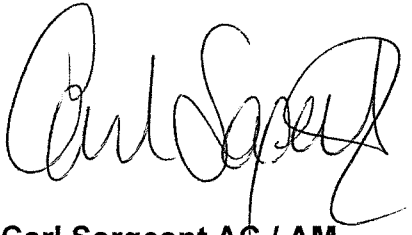
Printed on 100%

the same location. The links to relevant national planning policy documents are as follows:

<http://gov.wales/topics/planning/policy/minerals/mineralsplanning/?lang=en>

<http://gov.wales/topics/planning/policy/policyclarificationletters/2014/cl-04-14/?lang=en>

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carl Sargeant', written in a cursive style.

Carl Sargeant AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Cyfoeth Naturiol
Minister for Natural Resources