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River Basin Planning – Consultation,  
Water Management Unit  
DOE NIEA  
17 Antrim Road  
Tonagh  
Lisburn  
BT28 3AL

Dear Sir,

Re: Significant Water Management Issues in the North Eastern River Basin District

**1. What do you consider to be the most significant issues affecting the water environment in the North Eastern [or other] River Basin District?**

I am most concerned about the pollution potential of oil and gas exploration—particularly the deep exploratory drilling operation proposed by Rathlin Energy Ltd to be undertaken at Ballinlea in Co Antrim (planning application E/2013/0093/F), into the unconventional shale gas reservoir, and the associated stimulation tests proposed.

I am also concerned about the cumulative effects of expanding exploratory drilling further across the Rathlin Basin licence area, and should the extraction of either conventional or unconventional oil or gas be considered commercially viable, the cumulative impact on our water system and ecosystems could be absolutely devastating.

Northern Ireland does not have a good track record in preventing or managing existing industrial and agricultural pollution, so my concern is not misplaced.

The additional burden of attempting to prevent or manage the pollution potential of the extractive hydrocarbon industry, (including millions of litres of radioactive wastewater) should not be added to an already overburdened sector.

**2. What do you consider to be the most significant issues affecting the water environment in your Local Management Area?**

As outlined above.

**3. How do you think these issues should be addressed, and what would you choose to do first?**

Do not allow any exploratory drilling for hydrocarbons – especially not into unconventional gas reservoirs.

IF approval is given for drilling and it should NOT be – undertake meticulous and rigorous detailed baseline water testing for all of the potential chemicals, isotopes, etc. that could possibly be found to result from exploratory drilling, BEFORE it begins. (Base the testing regime on the experiences and research coming out of places where this industry has previously operated.)

**4. Are there any projects that we could work on in partnership to help improve the water environment in North Eastern [or other] River Basin District?**

Yes. Provide training and certification to local volunteers in water sampling (and testing if appropriate) so that they can partner with you in testing their local waterways NOW.

Yours faithfully

Name.....