



Department
of Energy &
Climate Change

3 Whitehall Place
London
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www.gov.uk/decc

Ms Rachel Thompson
Via email: request-336514-60c172bd@whatdotheyknow.com

Our ref: FOI2016/12775

23 June 2016

Dear Ms Thompson,

Thank you for your email of 25 May in which you requested the following information:

Please send me a copy of the original report submitted by on 30th March; or thereabouts, by the independent Climate Change Committee (CCC) regarding their study of the environmental impact of the shale gas technology.

We have considered your request in accordance with the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIRs) as the information you have sought disclosure of, does in our view, fall within the definition of 'environmental information' as stated in the EIRs.

I can confirm that the Department holds information falling within the terms of your request. This information is exempt from disclosure under Regulation 12(4)(d) of the EIRs which relates to material in the course of completion, unfinished documents and incomplete data and is therefore being withheld.

This exception is subject to the public interest test. The key public interest considerations we have taken into account are set out below. In considering the public interest we have applied a presumption in favour of disclosure as required by regulation 12(2) of the EIRs.

We are carefully considering our response to the CCC report. The CCC report forms part of material required to be laid before Parliament under section 49 of the Infrastructure Act. That material is still in the course of completion and we are committed to laying the report and our response before Parliament as soon as practicable.

We understand that the release of this information may assist the public's understanding of how the Government is developing the material required to be laid before Parliament under section 49 of the Infrastructure Act, and more broadly the working of Government, thus making Government more accountable to the electorate.

In this instance the process of developing the material required to be laid before Parliament under section 49 of the Infrastructure Act is on-going. We consider that it is important to release this information once complete, quality assured, accurate and finalised for laying before Parliament. Releasing the information requested whilst incomplete would potentially serve to create confusion and misunderstanding. This would also risk undermining officials' ability to discuss and exchange views in advance of publication, and as such some protection must be applied so time and resources are not spent explaining or justifying ideas that are not, or may never be finalised. We also think that it is in the public interest that Parliament has the first opportunity to consider the reports given that the Act requires that the report and response be prepared and laid before Parliament.

We consider that in this instance, the public interest in maintaining the exception in Regulation 12(4)(d) outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, and the Department's decision is therefore to withhold the information.

Appeals Procedure

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. Internal review requests should be submitted within 40 working days of the date of receipt of the response to your original letter and should be sent to the Information Rights Unit at:

Information Rights Unit
Department for Business, Innovation & Skills
1 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0ET
E-mail: foi.requests@bis.gsi.gov.uk

Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF

Yours sincerely,

Office of Unconventional Gas and Oil