

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (APPEALS) (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2013

**APPEAL UNDER SECTION 47(2) OF THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997 BY
DART ENERGY (FORTH VALLEY) LTD CONCERNING COAL BED METHANE PRODUCTION, INCLUDING
DRILLING, WELL SITE ESTABLISHMENT AT 14 LOCATIONS AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE AT
LETHAM MOSS, FALKIRK, AND POWDRAKE ROAD, NEAR AIRTH, PLEAN**

(REFERENCES PPA-240-2032 AND PPA-390-2029)

PRECOGNITION BY LESLIE DICK

ON BEHALF OF

**CONCERNED COMMUNITIES OF FALKIRK
(AND SUPPORTERS)**

1. The Dick family have been farming around the Letham and Airth area for close to one hundred years. I am the third generation farmer and I have two sons and four grandchildren following me.
2. For many years, Dart Energy and its predecessor Composite Energy have been putting pressure on me to sell land to them for drilling purposes. I told them I did not want to sell them any land because I did not want my farmland broken up. I was told by the land agents of Dart/Composite Energy that, if I did not sell the land voluntarily, they would obtain it through a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO). Acting on my lawyer's advice, I resisted this and went to the lengths of hiring a QC to prevent my land being broken up. I understood that I would be unlikely to be able to prevent the break up of my land and I had the option of either negotiating with Composite/Dart Energy for the best deal for me or Dart/Composite Energy could apply for a CPO in which case I would become involved in a long legal process with less certainty for myself as to the eventual deal I would end with. I reluctantly felt I had to deal with them to make the best out of a bad situation.

3. My future and farming is now looking a lot less secure. We grow around 400 acres of oats for Morning Foods and Quaker Oats, about 700 acres of barley for crisp malting and 300 acres of wheat for distilling in the whisky trade. This is all done under contract. With the intervention of Dart Energy onto our land, being able to fulfil these contracts or commit to new contracts will be very risky. My fields are being broken up by the drilling sites and access roads and I am worried about the side effects of the actual drilling. I have read about how areas of farmland in Australia have been devastated and broken up by the drilling and access roads and that they have put a 2 kilometre buffer zone around dwellings and businesses.
4. I was told there would be a one kilometre between drill sites or one site every 80 acres here. The sites already on the ground and the proposed sites are, on average, only 300 to 400 metres apart which is 4 sites per 80 acres. These sites additionally all have access roads and underground services which will destroy all the existing land drainage systems as well as devaluing the farms. My concern is not just about this application but also about the future for farming in this area as I am told that Dart Energy is planning many more wells in the future.
5. On 11 February 2014, our First Minister, Mr Salmon, was on television visiting a hydro power station in Spain promoting clean energy which Scotland has an abundance of. If this was developed why do we need Dart Energy and British Gas who are refusing to put any bonds in place to restore the sites after they are finished with them? On the same news programme, Mr Richard Lockhead, Minister for Agriculture, was stressing how important the farming industry is to Scotland for its future well being, export markets and food security for the nation. What is more important, clean food or dirty energy?
6. I am told there are risks of leaks and fugitive emissions of gas contaminating the land and water and so destroying my crops. We farmers pay a licence to SEPA to use the bore holes for water for irrigating their crops for human consumption e.g. potatoes and

vegetables. I'm also worried about contamination getting into the human food chain because of this. If the drilling went ahead I would no longer have any confidence in the whole "farm to fork" approach to sustainable agriculture that our government and community want.

7. I have around thirty neighbouring farmers who have all signed the community charter and are in agreement with me and do not want this application to be the thin edge of the wedge which sees Dart sites on their land in the future.
8. I am lucky to have lived my whole life in this beautiful area of productive countryside with good farming neighbours and I want my children and grandchildren to continue to experience this. The continued encroachment of drilling rigs will change this forever.

18 February 2014