



**Safety Before LNG**  
*Protecting the Shannon Estuary and its people*

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**The Impact of Fracked Gas  
on the Climate  
and  
its Impact  
on Ireland's Climate Goals  
should we  
Facilitate the Importation of  
Fracked Gas  
from  
North America into Ireland**

Joint Committee on Climate Action, Houses of the Oireachtas, Leinster House, Dublin 2

Oral Presentation by John McElligott

9<sup>th</sup> October 2019

Chair,

It is from the backdrop of both Eddie Mitchell and I interacting with the European Commission on the PCI issue directly, as members of civil society, that we are speaking to you today on the matter.

An LNG terminal on the Shannon Estuary is dangerous to people within a 3-mile radius, will sterilise the Shannon Estuary for future development due to the exclusion zones required around LNG tankers and is polluting. And fracked gas in the energy mix is not acceptable in our eyes due to the Climate and Health issues associated with fracking.

LNG terminals are needed in order to import fracked gas into Europe from the USA on a massive scale. We think that this PCI approval process is really only motivated by the trade agreement between the US and the EU to flood Europe with US fracked gas over any climate considerations.

PCI status is effectively a declaration that a project is in the national interest for planning, funding and permitting. We always said throughout the years of campaigning that we needed proof that it was a project that was genuinely in the national interest, but that is still not forthcoming.

PCI status also means your hands in the Climate Action Committee are already tied and locked in to the fracked gas option before you can even assess and choose from the best reasonable energy alternatives for the country. We think that this is neither legal nor right.

We have discovered that the European Commission only assesses gas projects under the three obligatory criteria of Market Integration, Competition and Security of Supply, whereas it must, in fact, by law, assess each gas project under a fourth criteria also, which is sustainability. To not do so, is illegal. The PCI Regulation defines sustainability as “[...] *the contribution of a project to reduce emissions [...] taking into account expected changes in climatic conditions*”.

Now, Minister Bruton did seem to accept he had knowledge of this in the Dáil last Thursday evening when he stated: *“I have instructed my officials to ask the European Commission whether the implications of importing LNG, both conventionally and unconventionally extracted, into the European Union have been examined as to the sustainable, secure and competitive energy policy. If not, we have asked that such an examination should be undertaken.”*

But we ask how could he, knowing this, then risk approving the project going on the PCI list – if that is indeed what he did? For we still do not know exactly what was decided in Brussels last Friday because this decision making is going on behind doors, in secret, with no public consultation or oversight.

And ACER, the Agency for the Cooperation of European Regulators, and whose opinion the Commission must take on board, even declared a few weeks ago that the European Commission was *“not properly considering the merits of the projects in terms of potential contribution to sustainability”*.

We are in a rules-based process. Were the Government to endorse a contravention of EU laws to import US fracked gas into Europe, that would not be acceptable to any right-minded person.

Thank you.

Briefing papers included:

1. Submission on European Commission Consultation on list of candidates Projects of Common Interest on Gas Infrastructure by Safety Before LNG - 29th May 2019
2. Opinion No 19/2019 of the European Union Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators of 25th September 2019 on the Draft Regional Lists of Proposed Gas Projects of Common Interest 2019
3. Objections raised by 7 Irish MEPs to the Director General of Energy - 3rd October 2019
4. Reply from the Director General Ditte Juul Jorgensen for Energy at the European Commission to the 7 Irish MEPs - 4th October 2019
5. Explanatory Flier By '*Love Leitrim*' - "The Truth: 'Natural' Gas (or fracked shale gas, as it should be called)"
6. Letter from Fred Logue Solicitors, acting on behalf of Friends of the Irish Environment to Minister Bruton dated 27<sup>th</sup> September 2019.