

Proposed surface mine at Highthorn, Northumberland, NE61 5EE

Planning Inspectorate reference APP/P2935/V/16/3158266

**“Statements of opposition by six eminent climate and environmental scientists”,
submitted by Dr David Golding CBE, 9th November 2016**

Professor Sir Tom Blundell FRS FMedSci

"Any new developments to burn coal threaten efforts moves to more environmentally friendly renewable sources of energy. This development must be opposed if we are to avoid the further impacts of CO2 emissions on our climate."

Professor Sir Tom Blundell FRS FMedSci
Chair of the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution, 1998-2005
Department of Biochemistry, University of Cambridge,
Tennis Court Road, Cambridge CB2 1GA
(Personal communication to D.W. Golding, 22nd October 2016)

Professor Hayley Fowler

"The last two years have been the warmest on record and 2016 is set to be warmer still. The Government rhetoric in the Paris COP 21 talks was for reductions in coal-fired power stations and increases in clean energy sources yet they want to approve a new open cast coal mine in a pristine environment next to Druridge Bay in Northumberland. Digging up and burning another 3 million tonnes of coal will not only affect the local environment but contribute to further temperature rises and, more worryingly, to increases in extreme events – floods and droughts. We need new clean energy sources, not more coal."

Professor Hayley Fowler
Professor of Climate Change Impacts and Royal Society Wolfson Research Merit Award Holder,
Water Resource Systems Research Laboratory,
School of Civil Engineering and Geosciences,
Newcastle University, NE1 7RU.
(Personal communication to D.W. Golding, 20th June 2016)

Professor Sir John Houghton CBE FRS

We know the situation now is substantially more serious than we knew in 2009. The world's nations meeting in Paris last December realised this when 195 nations were represented (essentially all the world's nations) and all agreed in principle that carbon emissions must rapidly be reduced to zero by around 2050 so that the temperature rise due to the emissions could be limited to 2 degrees maximum. The rise in temperature due to carbon emissions is already over 1 degree and the meeting recognised that 2 degrees maximum might not be adequate to prevent sea level rise occurring by the end of this century that, for instance, could render some small island states in the pacific region becoming largely uninhabitable and bring big problems to some low lying big cities. The meeting therefore added that 1.5 degrees should be stated as the desirable limit to be aimed at - even though it would be tough to achieve. So although the decisions at the meeting have to be agreed formally by the nations, there is much more of a willingness to take action. All nations need to accept it more positively.

Fossil fuel burning creates substantially more carbon dioxide for a given supply of energy than other sources, but remains one of the biggest sources of energy. Unless the emissions of carbon dioxide are removed at source and not allowed to enter the atmosphere, new sources of fossil fuel burning should not be allowed. This applies with particular force to coal, since it is the most carbon-polluting, by far, of all the commonly available types of fuels.

In the USA led by President Obama fossil fuel burning is now beginning to be replaced by other more efficient or less polluting energy sources and future plans to phase it out are in preparation. China also has plans to quite rapidly replace its fossil fuel energy sources with carbon free sources. We in the UK should be working more definitely in the same directions.

A future with carbon-free energy sources will be much more healthy, save many lives and also reduce damaging sea level rise. Also energy will become much less polluting and cheaper to produce. The sooner we get on with it the better the future will be.

Cont'd

Professor Sir John Houghton CBE FRS

Chair of the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution, 1992-1998;

Chair/Co-Chair of the IPCC, 1988-2004, and Lead Editor for the IPCC for the first three of its reports; Author of "Global warming, the complete briefing", 5th Edition, 2014.

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(Personal communication to D.W. Golding, 18th May, 2016)

Professor Chris Kilsby

"Just as it was confirmed that April 2016 is the seventh month in a row to have broken global temperature records, I heard of the proposal to dig up and burn 3 million tonnes of coal in Northumberland. This is simply insane and unnecessary! It is not only dangerous to our atmosphere to use inefficient and high emitting coal, but we don't need to, as recent milestones in renewable energy generation have shown. The electricity generated from coal burning in the UK fell to zero several times in May, for the first time since the Victorian era. Also in May, Portugal's electricity generation ran entirely on renewables for four consecutive days, after a long history of reliance on coal. I therefore strongly oppose any new coal mining, as it perpetuates our dangerous fossil fuel burning habit, diverts investment away from renewables and inevitably adds to rising global temperatures. "

Professor Chris Kilsby

Professor of Hydrology and Climate Change,
School of Civil Engineering and Geosciences,
Newcastle University, NE1 7RU.

(Personal communication to D.W. Golding, 20th May 2016)

Professor Sir John Lawton CBE FRS

"This application is deeply disturbing in at least two ways. First Druridge Bay is one of the finest landscapes in Northumberland, and it alarms me to think that somebody (anybody!) would seek to open an open cast mine nearby. But second, an application to mine vast amounts of coal flies in the face of the UK's commitment in Paris in 2015 to fight climate change. We have to stop burning coal and other fossil fuels as rapidly as possible, or face catastrophic climate change. This application would lock us in to continuing to burn coal for years and is dangerously unacceptable."

Professor Sir John Lawton CBE FRS

Chair of the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution, 2005-2011.

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(Personal communication to D.W. Golding, 13th June 2016)

Professor Phil Taylor

"I believe this proposed open cast coal mine is non-progressive, unnecessary and environmentally damaging. The UK government plans to phase out coal fired energy generation by 2025 due to the high CO2 emissions this produces. Coal is one of the most polluting sources of energy and there are many lower carbon alternatives available. Solar energy production was larger than coal in the UK over a week in May this year which shows we are making great progress in cleaning up our energy supplies. Many business and employment opportunities arise from this low carbon future which the North East of England can benefit from if we embrace this change. We need to look forward, think of future generations and positively support the transition to a low carbon future as individuals and organisations."

Professor Phil Taylor

Siemens Professor of Energy Systems; & Director of the Institute for Sustainability at Newcastle University;
Director of the newly announced EPSRC National Centre for Energy Systems Integration.

Devonshire Building, Newcastle University, NE1 7RU.

(Personal communication to D.W. Golding, 31st May 2016)

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