

Subsurface Virtual Conference - Session 4

Utilising the subsurface to achieve net zero: Regulations and best practice

Wednesday 19 August – 10:00 – 11:15

JILL SUTCLIFFE - Don't forget evidence - 2 govt reports pointed to communities experiencing the worst impacts of such onshore developments

JH: I think this speaks to the importance of regulating in context. As you highlight, in the shale gas context developments have been situated close to communities and understanding the impacts, both environmental and social, are key when we think of how to regulate.

TSH: Yes, these two reports shed light on the impacts, and it was great to get these. I think there is definitely a need for a central repository of knowledge so we can build and share

Chris Hilson - I have a question on best practice. What about ideas of BAT? And, separately, is best practice not often a way of industry pushing for a voluntary approach instead of regulation - in which case the emphasis is really often on existing practice and what happens to be best among industry at that particular moment - not how good it could be with proper regulation?

JH: BAT plays a really key role. Moving forwards, new developments may need further guidance on how different BATs fit together and apply e.g. in the shale gas context we've seen a new guidance document on upstream hydrocarbon exploration and production

TSH: BAT is a ongoing issue within any field that has technological developments. It is up to a CASE and risk management is more flexible and nimble to address this. Best practice will necessarily take this into account.

JILL SUTCLIFFE - they are and it's called acidisation. Many thanks for great webinar

Chris Hilson - Observation/qu for Jo - what is the relevant comparator for your approach to subsurface regulation and its adequacy? Is it other subsurface minerals? Is it surface? Is it other new technology (GM, nano etc)? Over-time so not expecting answer - parting qu to ponder.

Indeed, thanks all.

JH: Today I've been focussing on drawing from use of the subsurface for shale gas exploration. I think this offers some valuable insights into particular challenges posed by subsurface developments (albeit minerals here, some of the lessons can be applied more generally.) Moving forward, in thinking about subsurface regulation, there are wider lessons to be drawn from regulatory approaches to new technologies/industries more generally, and what these approaches can teach us about regulatory response to risk. In particular, post Brexit the wider lessons on regulatory approaches from non-subsurface developments can provide useful insights in thinking about environmental governance and the challenges moving forward.

JILL SUTCLIFFE - Hear hear. Many thanks.