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Solid Earth Discussions

Interactive comment on "Hydraulic fracturing in thick shale basins: problems in identifying faults in the Bowland and Weald Basins, UK" *by* David K. Smythe

Anonymous Referee #4

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The manuscript:

Hydraulic fracturing in thick shale basins: problems in identifying faults in the Bowland and Weald Basins, UK by David K. Smythe

is clearly a journalistic/information text on the serious problematis aroung fracking activities. Its scientific content/contribution is really negligible and the entire manuscript is strongly biased by a rather dogmatic opinion of the author. Furthermore, faults are treated in different ways along the manuscript and this shows the not-complete (to be kind) competence of the author on the subject as well as on the subject (e.g. faults are treated as an ideal element, all equals, independently from their capability to reactivate, change in permeability, or to trigger earthquakes – that the author missed

to consider the magnitude. . ., the assumed straight correspondence between surface mapped faults and their propagation at depth, the real reason why faults are missing in some maps –just compare a 19th century geological map and the equivalent from the 20th century. . .). In this way my opinion is that the manuscript is not acceptable, and I do not see an effective way to suggest a revision: too many different subjects are mixed and trivially treated. An entire book will be necessary to provide an objective and competent discussion in this important environmental task (this might be a reasonable suggestion to the author). Let me (I consider myself an environment protector) enter directly in the subject of environment-fracking. It is really a big environmental problematic. And deserve a serious and competent discussion. Manuscript like this one, with scientific flakes, would just produce the opposite than pretended: It would be very easy, for the companies, to overtake the unproved and dogmatic opinions in this manuscript. This would leave them to continue to operate without control. I am confident that this is not the aim of the author, so my opinion is just a warning: we must be environment protector BUT on a very competent scientific basis to avoid inducing the opposite effect resulting from the unreliability of the environment-protector statements.

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