

Fracking to begin in Britain after court ruling

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The project in Lancashire, northwest England, has attracted much controversy and was opposed by local authorities, residents and environmentalists

Energy company Cuadrilla will begin fracking Britain's first horizontal shale-gas well on Saturday after the High Court in London dismissed a

last-minute request for an injunction by environmentalists.

"We are delighted to be starting our hydraulic fracturing operations as planned," Francis Egan, CEO of Cuadrilla, said in a statement.

The project in Lancashire, northwest England, has attracted much controversy and was opposed by local authorities, residents and environmentalists, who launched legal action to block operations.

But judge Michael Supperstone ruled that he did "not consider that any of the grounds of challenge raise a serious issue to be tried."

He also refused a request by the local Lancashire County Council for a judicial review of emergency planning procedures regarding the site, nestled in the Lancashire countryside.

The company has completed two horizontal shale-gas wells—2,300 metres and 2,100 metres below the surface, at the site.

It will test the flow of natural gas within the wells, with initial results expected in the new year.

"If commercially recoverable this will displace costly imported gas, with lower emissions, significant economic benefit and better security of energy supply for the UK," said Egan.

Fracking uses hydraulic pressure to break up underground rock, allowing the flow of previously trapped gas.

Locals and environmentalists argue that fracking damages tourism, contaminates water supplies, hurts wildlife, causes earthquakes and contributes to [global climate change](#).

Cuadrilla's first attempt at [fracking](#) seven years ago was ended after it triggered minor earthquakes, putting their plans on hold while more stringent measures were put in place.

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