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The SNP faces another court battle over one of its policies, after energy firm Ineos launched legal action against the ban on fracking.

The company, which owns the Grangemouth refinery, today lodged a petition for judicial review into the recent decision to outlaw shale extraction north of the border.

The SNP pushed ahead with the ban, with the backing of Labour and the Greens, even though Scottish Government experts said shale could be produced safely.

Shadow finance secretary Murdo Fraser backed the move by Ineos, saying a ban on fracking not only damaged the economy, but missed a chance to lower energy bills too.

It's the third time the SNP government has found itself defending one of its decisions in court.

In 2016, the Supreme Court ruled elements of its named person policy were unlawful.

And last year, a lengthy battle to impose alcohol minimum pricing eventually reached a conclusion following a challenge by the Scotch Whisky Association.

Scottish Conservative shadow finance secretary Murdo Fraser said:

"The SNP's decision to ban fracking is rooted in dogma, and ignores the economic benefits it could bring to Scotland.

"Further exploration of shale extraction could also reduce the need for gas imports, and even help relieve fuel poverty.

"The Scottish Government's own advisers know this, yet still ministers are sticking to this needless and potentially damaging ban.

"This is another day in court for an SNP government which doesn't think its policies through.

"That's embarrassing for Scotland's reputation, and exposes the amateurish attitude of the SNP on a range of issues.

“Fracking could be explored safely if properly regulated – and the whole country could benefit as a consequence.”