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A decision by the SNP to ban fracking has been attacked as “short-sighted and economically damaging” by the Scottish Conservatives.

Energy minister Paul Wheelhouse confirmed in a statement to the Scottish Parliament today that the extraction of shale would be prohibited north of the border, continuing on from the current moratorium which was put in place in 2015.

This is despite the Scottish Government’s own scientists saying shale could be explored safely, with many other parts of the world enjoying huge economic boosts as a result of the industry.

The SNP’s hypocrisy on the matter was also pointed out.

Ministers are quite happy for imported shale to be used and refined in Scotland, the Scottish Conservatives said, but won’t embark on the practice of extracting it themselves.

Scottish Conservative shadow finance secretary Murdo Fraser said:

“This is a short-sighted and economically damaging decision which is nothing more than a bid to appease the green elements of the pro-independence movement.

“According to the Scottish Government’s own scientists, the extraction of shale from Scotland, with the right safety checks, could be done safely.

“It could also support thousands of jobs and deliver economic benefits to communities.

“With the struggles the North Sea is facing, there could hardly be a better time to be getting on with this.

“Instead, the Scottish Government is killing this off while other parts of the world press ahead with fracking.

“There’s also a huge hypocrisy from the SNP here.

“It’s happy to receive shale from the US to refine at Grangemouth – a major

industry in itself – yet doesn't want to have that technology here.”