

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

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Dear Dr. Westaway,

the first part of your interactive comment SC18 contains criticism of the Journal's editorial policy regarding the handling of manuscript se-2015-134 authored by D.K. Smythe. I'm sorry to say that, from what you wrote, it seems to me that you are not fully familiar with the EGU open access publication policy. Actually, all manuscripts that are sent out for review are automatically published online in the Discussion Section of the journal (SED) and get a doi number. In such a way we provide the possibility for anyone, not just the reviewers, to make constructive comments suitable to help the relevant Topical Editor come to decide on the manuscript. So, what has happened so far with

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manuscript se-2015-134 is fully compliant with the workflow of SE and all EGU open access journals. Publication in SED does not mean final acceptance in SE because manuscripts in SED can be rejected dependent on the reviews and interactive comments. Since everything is available for free download, the interactive comments are also part of the "permanent record within the public domain" thus allowing interested readers to understand in a comprehensive way what is the subject of the debate. I would say that a very poor manuscript, typically rejected, does not contribute to give credibility to the Author(s). To conclude, as Chief Executive Editor of Solid Earth, I have a twofold feeling on what is happening with this manuscript. On one hand, I'm very happy to see that, given the sensitive issue, the manuscript stimulated a vigorous discussion, thus utilising the editorial workflow. On the other hand, I have the impression that not all the content of the interactive comments/replies comply with the purpose of providing constructive contributions to the review process of the manuscript, and this is not what we are looking for. I fully agree with the Topical Editor that the ongoing debate is positive in helping to make further progress on such a delicate issue and, consequently, I would recommend that you, and everybody else that adds further interactive comments, deals strictly with the science of the manuscript and nothing else. Last but not least, given the societal importance of this issue, the ongoing discussion on manuscript se-2015-134 may suggest the need of a review paper on the subject. We will be glad to handle it in Solid Earth.

Best regards,

Fabrizio Storti

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