

Woodburn forest: Infrastrata's drill operation ends without finding oil

By Conor Macauley

BBC NI Environment Correspondent

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PRESS EYE

A controversial drilling operation in County Antrim has finished, apparently without hitting oil.

The oil company Infrastrata announced the news on its website on Thursday.

It said it was disappointed not to have found a "hydrocarbon accumulation" at the site at Woodburn forest near Carrickfergus.

Two areas the firm drilled to a depth of 2,000 metres underground had been "water wet," it said.

It said the well "will now be plugged and abandoned".

Celebration

Protesters have opposed the drill operation, claiming it could impact the water supply to nearby reservoirs.

But Northern Ireland Water had said the project did not present any risk to the water supply.

James Orr, the Northern Ireland director of the environmental campaign group Friends Of The Earth, said the "earth has spoken".

"Today is a time for celebration - this is fantastic news for the community, our water, our climate and our wellbeing," he said.

Evaluate

"We feel vindicated that this harmful, worthless and ill-conceived project is now over.

"The democratic meltdown that allowed exploratory drilling in Woodburn can never be repeated."

The overtime bill for the **policing operation at the site came to almost £200,000.**

Infrastrata said it would now evaluate the data before deciding where to focus its future exploration activity.