


## Fracking victory for KZN farmers



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A judgement handed down in the Western Cape High Court last Wednesday, 3rd May, has ruled against The South African Agency for Promotion of Petroleum and Exploitation (PASA), The Minister of Mineral Resources and Rhino Oil and Gas Exploration South Africa (Pty) Ltd on an application for exploration rights on more than 800 000ha's in Northern KwaZulu-Natal.

Hailing the ruling as a "massive victory" for the local farmers who took legal action against the application for exploration, Kwanalu CEO Sandy La Marque said: "Last week's court decision is a huge relief for farmers not only in the northern parts of KZN but the entire province. We commend those farmers involved for their hard work and determination in achieving this result."

Rhino Oil and Gas submitted their Notice of Application for exploration in two areas - one in the KZN Midlands, the other in Northern KZN, in late 2015 and early 2016 respectively. Both applications covered a total area of more than 1 600 000ha and in excess of 15 000 farms.

Kwanalu was quick to take a proactive stance against exploration and potential fracking, raising the alert to its members and the KZN public in 2010 and again in 2015 stressing the need to take action by participating in the processes as determined.

"When Rhino Oil and Gas first submitted their Notice of Application for exploration in KZN, Kwanalu expressed its concerns about the business and environmental impact and the potential health implications associated with the extraction process known as fracking," explained La Marque.

Commenting on the court ruling, Rob Hoatson, the farmer behind the legal action, said: "We are satisfied with the judgement and will abide by the court ruling."

"Fracking is considered to be one of the single biggest agricultural, socio-economic and environmental threats facing South Africa so, we are very pleased to see this ruling. This bodes well for everyone to work within the legislation that has been put in place to govern the processes and procedures associated with mineral and gas exploration in this country," she said.

Offering reassurances to farmers in the KZN Midlands about the outstanding application for exploration in their area, La Marque said: "We are at the advanced stages of instituting legal intervention regarding the Midlands exploration application brought by Rhino Oil and Gas."