

Dr. Ray Gosine
Chair, NL Hydraulic Fracturing Review Panel
c/o Office of Associate Vice-President (Research)
Bruneau Centre for Research and Innovation, IIC-3067
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May 11, 2015

Dear Dr. Gosine:

Re: Submission to Hydraulic Fracturing Review Panel

I am a retired earth scientist with extensive national and international experience in dealing with environmental issues. I have lived on and off in Bonne Bay for many years, and continue to work on the geology of Gros Morne National Park. I am following the debate about possible fracking along the West Coast with much interest, and have already made several submissions to the Government of NL urging caution (e.g. letter to C-NLOPB Sept 25, 2013; letter to Dr. Batterson, Director, Geological Survey of NL, Nov 27, 2013;).

In my view it would be irresponsible to permit land-to-sea or any other fracking operations without first establishing a full range of background data about ground and surface water, seismicity, geological structure, and ecology in areas of exploration interest. Such baseline information need to be gathered before permission is given to use hydraulic fracturing techniques. I question whether the Province has the resources and personnel to carry out such studies, and I am completely opposed to the idea that such work be left to the exploration companies involved. It may not be in their interests to follow best practices, nor should it be their job to produce the necessary background data – a task that takes much prior work. This means that the Province must have the resources and personnel to carry out this work. Without a full understanding of the environmental conditions, it would be foolhardy to issue license for exploration using hydraulic fracturing.

There are, of course, many other factors to be considered, including the potential effects of fracking operations on human and ecosystem health and on roads and other infrastructure, the disposal of waste fluids, and the long-term management of abandoned wells. Taking these into consideration, I believe that the real risks are not worth the possible benefits, and that fracking operations should not be permitted.

Sincerely,

A. Berger