

Keep Newfoundland and Labrador frack-free

I am opposed to fracking, and wish it to be banned in Newfoundland and Labrador: There is widespread community opposition to fracking. Nova Scotia and New Brunswick have moratoriums. I would like to see more emphasis placed on developing green energy.

Fracking uses unsustainable amounts of water. A fracking project requires anywhere from 10 million to 200 million litres of water. Permitting fracking in the province could further threaten drinking water supplies. Water is central to the very existence of people, plants and animals, and all of it must be protected for the common good from generation to generation.

Fracking wastewater is a key threat to drinking water, the environment and public health. Chemicals used in the fracking process pose a threat to our water sources, ecosystems and public health because there are currently no safe methods to dispose of fracking wastewater. Municipal wastewater plants are not equipped to deal with fracking wastewater. When the wastewater flowback is discharged into waterways, it is a threat to drinking water supplies given that many of the chemicals are undisclosed.

The combined emissions associated with extraction, combustion, and methane and CO₂ releases – means that fracked gas can be as polluting as coal.

Fracking wells leak 40 to 60 per cent more methane than conventional natural gas wells. This happens when water is forced down into a fracking well in order to fracture the rock formations. Methane flows up the well and is released into the atmosphere before it can be captured. Methane, in particular, is a very powerful greenhouse gas because it can trap 20 to 25 times more heat in the atmosphere than carbon dioxide.

Many pro-fracking arguments are based on job creation and income potential for the jurisdiction, but the reality is that beyond temporary construction and trucking jobs, few permanent, full-time jobs are created. Those few jobs created typically have poor working conditions and pose risks to workers' health. Governments and industry representatives promote fracking as a way to boost job creation. However, these are neither ethical nor sustainable jobs.

Instead of focusing on possible new fracking jobs, our governments could commit to reducing emissions and encourage a whole different set of jobs including weatherproofing, renewable power projects, public transit, sustainable agriculture and much more.

Policies and decision making on water use should be based on recognizing water as a commons, public trust and human right. Communities up and down the West Coast of Newfoundland and throughout the Atlantic have opposed fracking, and must be part of the decision-making process.

Sincerely,

D. McGee