

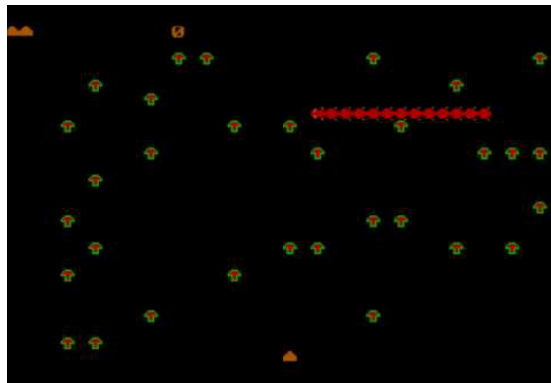
May 7, 2015

Dr. Ray Gosine
Chair, Hydraulic Fracturing Review Panel
c/o Office of Associate Vice President
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Dr. Gosine and Panel Members:

Subject: Hydraulic Fracturing in Newfoundland and Labrador

I've been trying to decide over the past few days what I should write in this letter. I remember it was back in 2008 when I first viewed a video online showing someone's tap water catching afire. It was a video out of Pennsylvania. I've seen high sulfur levels in water, however this was a different beast all by its own – and it was then I informed myself about this new method of drilling known as horizontal hydraulic fracturing. Unlike regular vertical wells and stimulation in the conventional sense, now they were also drilling below the ground in soft shale deposit pretty much like the old Commodore 64 game, Centipede.



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Picture the red dots with the green outline as pockets of hydrocarbons within the shale formation, and the red Centipede is the oil exploration. The red centipede is guided by the arrows on your keyboard and not hit the edges of the screen while trying to pick off all these pockets of red/green dots. As you keep going and adding to your list of red/green dots picked off by the centipede, the centipede itself grows longer – making it harder to handle as the game goes on.

It might be a fairly simplistic view of hydraulic fracturing and does not deal with the potential consequences of chemicals as the fallout of such a procedure – however it is a representation of the oil industry's bad reputation when it comes to the environment; and frankly it also represents greed – and

that's greed reflected by both the oil and gas sector, lobbyists, and some politicians – both local and beyond.

As you pump out the oil, not only do the profits go up – but also the potential for environmental impact. The centipede is a representation of how the industry has a way of growing out of control to the point where you can't control the repercussions – and you crash in the wall, loosing the game.

Except in this case, it's not as easy as clicking through a few computer windows, and restating the game expecting it to be fresh and new like on the computer. Real life and the environment does not work that way.

There is no *Dus Ex Machina*.

There is no “Reset Button”.

Once the environment is broken, it's broken and it will remain that way for hundreds of years. If this panel is confused as to the position of all Native Americans in this debate, then not only are they not respecting Native beliefs – but also the fact that these people dealt with the environment far longer than you, or me in this great land. This is their tradition and it's passed down throughout the last millennium and longer. You can argue that they are against advancement and growth. However Native Americans are thinking about the #1 thing that it seems to elude the energy industry and at this moment in time – the Governments of Canada and Newfoundland – **we need water to live.**

NASA, for years, as said “Follow the water”, when speaking of the search for potential extraterrestrial life. Why is it we are capable to understand this point of view, however we can't apply it to our own lives? Right now, we have one planet to live on and we're far more likely to damage this one beyond the point of return before we ever find actual life forms on other planets.

Back in the 1990s, as I was in high school, Canada was considered one of the best countries in the world in terms of environmental protection. What happened? Money happened. And it is really sad, because a few of the same people who were mentors of mine in grade school are now the ones pulling for this to happen here on the west coast. And that thought not only angers me, but it downright disappoints me.

I'm from Cape St. George, on the Port Au Port peninsula. Ground Zero. Growing up in the french school system and the social and cultural exposure during that time thought us as students to be proud of our culture and heritage. With this came a social responsibility to take care of the environment around us.

The tourism industry here in Port Au Port was built on grants from Heritage Canada, the Official Languages Act, and ACOA. The reason why these grants were given in the first place to various business and organizations is because part of their writeup to be sent in to these Government Agencies is TOURISM. I worked for the non-profit french organization here and I've seen a lot of these grant applications – the word Tourism is always the word touted and will you will find very few businesses on the peninsula, funded by grants, who did NOT include this as their main reasons for the grant

application. The idea that this will not affect tourism is a really short sighted response to a much bigger problem – the health and security of the population. Tourists today don't want to visit areas plagued by industry to the amount hydraulic fracking will do to us. They want to visit areas of the world are the least touched by industry. They are trying to escape from this type of life – not look at it further.

What's the point of telling students to put our pop cans and paper in a recycling box if you're going to go behind our backs years later and completely go against the mentality? It is intellectually conceited and ignorant to think that the problems experienced across North America will not happen here. No amount of regulations and protections will protect us 100%. As a Government, they've already proven to us they're next to incapable of a proper cleanup. As an electorate – why should the people trust any of this? The answer is they shouldn't.

What happened to the mentalities of some of those 'teachers' today? Are they too sucked in by the idea of financial gain? And the sad part is – **THIS IS SHORT TERM FINANCIAL GAIN**. And I'll go back to my centipede analogy – once the centipede grows too long, once the oil is extracted – the place is emptied out, the companies leave – and the citizens of the west coast of Newfoundland are the ones who have to suffer the consequences – we're the ones hitting that wall. Not the Government of Newfoundland, not the Government of Canada, not the oil sector. Us. Examples of this aren't too hard to find: Earnest Harmon Air Force Base – yet to be cleaned up. Abitibi in Grand Falls-Windsor. And Vale's latest red herring isn't helping the Government's situation. And we're already seeing the affects of light oil exploration on the peninsula here today with the depletion of several species of fish and vegetation in Port-Au-Port Bay.

When I look at the current Government and the last 3 Premiers who have not been elected in? Yeah, that's called delaying until people forget and become complacent. Congrats, for all I know you may have succeeded there. However, that doesn't mean some of us aren't aware of the process. It's there for all to see if they research it. And it's sad and frankly embarrassing on part of the Government that they should play on the indifference and complacency of others. I guess a population that doesn't care in general does pay off in the political circle after all.



I took this picture about 2 years ago on a ride up to Loretto – an old community in the Town of Cape St. George that's now more or less a cottage country. This is from Rosie's Brook, one of the feeders to

Red Brook. A local man had the water tested at all our main water sources. Marches Point was good, same for Red Brook , and Rouzes Brook – our water source for the town water system. This brook checked out as the best water available in Cape St. George.

In our household we do not drink the town water. It's a personal choice and means nothing to the quality of the town water which is fine. However, is it right for a company to come in and destroy this resource that many people of the town use? No. This goes for this brook, the smaller ones and the main one for our town system. We are lucky enough to be living in an area of the world today, that has not been tainted by industry. Is this such a bad thing?

What happens when it's gone? What happens when we can't use any of these water sources anymore? Remember – nothing is guaranteed.

However I can tell you one thing – you can guarantee the quality of these bodies of water by not messing with them. I said this to Tom Marshall and I'll say it again. The peninsula is more or less an island with an isthmus. What are we supposed to drink if this were to go ahead and pollute the sources of water we do have? Or, are you planning to sell us off on some type of water treatment system that – well well – we'll have to pay more for as well? Ah, a culture of consumption. Congrats.

I won't go into the details of why this process is wrong because I'm sure there are many others presenting these facts to you. I don't feel like repeating myself because I've done enough of that in the past 2 years as well. You can't take a horse to water but you can't make him drink...well in this case by the time the horse realizes he has to drink there will be no good water source for him to drink in.

Where will the oil companies be then? Not here that's for sure. But the people who lives here will be. I'm sure all the current local politicians will be in the ground or well away retired by the time the consequences roll around – how convenient – the ones who want it to go ahead here on the West Coast today, will be able to wash themselves of the problem within 20-30 years.

Then it's the youth of today that will be left to deal with the problem. The health problems, the pollution, the failing wells. Most of these politicians and lobbyists will be long gone before the real picture shows itself. We will be the long centipede hitting that wall. And the current Government's stance of, "Oh we'll deal with it if it happens." is not accurate because they are not the ones dealing with it – but a future Government. Look what you will be leaving us.

And if YOU as the Review Panel for Fracking here in Newfoundland and Labrador are counting and playing on the fact that the most of people are complacent then not only is the system broken, but this country is broken.

We live in one of the best places in the world when it comes to environment. The affects we've had are not as great as those across North America – something we need to cherish. At this point this should be something we cherish not destroy.

One thing that's always baffled me about Newfoundland is it has a tenancy to always get involved in an industry (in this case oil and gas) for which is ending it's shelf life among innovators of the world. So,

we jump on the bandwagon as it's nearing its destination. Why do we feel the need to follow in an industry of pollution long after its height? Why do we always have a tendency to sell off to someone else what is rightfully ours? Better yet – why do we allow outside companies to come here, after leaving a trail of damage across North America, to come in with little to no regard. Are we, as a province, really that small minded? I think it's time the TPTB actually give the citizens of this province a bit more credit – there is nothing fantastic about hydraulic fracturing and when you read through the details anyone can understand it.

These are all fallacies of the current government. There is nearly 70 years of history to this province and far more as colony of England and what have we done with it so far? There's depleted the Cod stocks. Yep, that's an industry as well and look where we drove that one. The Government has no trouble regulating fisherman to the limits, yet, the oil industry can stroll in with little to no oversight. Tell me, is the Government of Newfoundland planning to keep an observer on these oil sites 24/7 to watch the process, just as the observers do today with fisherman as they come ashore? I doubt it. It should be done but I gather it's the last thing on the Government's minds – it's blinded by the immediate money. Just like with the cod stocks. We have an uncanny ability to abuse or kill off the industries we do have. This is not the vision of progress. It's the vision of *Lord of the Rings' Mordor*.

We also seem to be good, as a province, at selling off our resources to another province, company or country that can come in and do the work for us at a cheaper price. Beyond the few construction jobs this creates for a limited amount of time, where is the benefit to the people in the long term? Let's not even talk about the use of workers from out of province coming in to do the work people can do here. What better example of this than Churchill Falls. Just how much of the Northern US states are we helping power right now? Yeah. Is it ours? No. We make what can be considered a royalty of a resource that rightfully belongs to us. And the funny part is, the creation of Muskrat falls will be barely a blip on the map with Quebec opens their new hydroelectric facility – it will make us near unnecessary. Do you think the US or other provinces will come to us over Quebec? Doubtful.

We need to stop relying on natural resources and the extraction of such resources as the basis of our economy. An economy has to be diversified, not myopic. In fact, this review committee, I can argue, was picked from a rather myopic vision by the Provincial Government. The intent is to present a petroleum-promoted result. If the intent was otherwise, there would be a greater representation on the group more so than there is now. Where is the real environmentalists? Where is the aboriginal presence? How about a regular member of a community from the west coast? Yeah, missing. The fact that MUN's faculty felt the need to start their own group to speak out against this speaks more than wonders.

I served on Town Council here in Cape St. George in 2012-2013 and the public meeting in regards to Shoal Point and Black Spruce's intentions, was held here in Cape St. George was **never advertised to the public**. I, as a sitting councilor was not notified of the meeting. The meeting was attended by the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, our MHA and reps from Shoal Point Energy. Do you call this a Public Meeting? I don't. And when I look at this entire “show” - I only see more of the same. If this panel could do this review process without considering public opinion, we would be already well on our way to ruining our environment.

It is the morally wrong decision to make. The actions of politicians in this province reflects that they have already acted immorally. And if any of you on this panel has trouble seeing that, well maybe it's time you tucked in your degrees and toddle off back into academia – you have forgotten the meaning of your education and moral standard in favor of dollar signs. It is no more complicated than that.

H. Simon