

I grew up in Buchans, part of a family that is very involved in the mining and extractive industries. I myself did at one point do some of my legal practice in NL in mining-related matters. This puts me in a position to offer some perspective on what our combined provincial and federal laws and regulations are like when it comes to setting up any extractive project. They are strong and focused both on protecting health but also waterways and flora and fauna.

That regulatory reality must be the context in which we consider Hydraulic Fracturing. One-off stories about problems with the practice are in and of themselves taken out of the context of the overall net record of 1000s of fracturing operations in Western North America that have been ongoing for decades. But even accepting for this, most of them occur in a regulatory environment that is vastly different than that found in Newfoundland and Labrador. As such, citing these examples is like comparing apples to oranges.

Expert panels and agencies have reviewed the overall body of evidence on fracturing and considered it in the proper context. The practice, as it would have to be carried-out in Canada and especially NL, would be obviously well managed and would have to meet the same stringent safety and environmental regulations as any other comparable industrial practice. In that context, the experts say it is a low risk activity. I refer primarily to this report from the UK Public Health Authority.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/shale-gas-extraction-emissions-are-a-low-risk-to-public-health>

Also, even in the US situations, it appears some perceived problems may have been overstated:

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<http://news.investors.com/ibd-editorials/091813-671585-study-says-fracking-does-not-produce-methane.htm>

". . . Now comes a study, conducted by scientists at the University of Texas and published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences — and co-financed by one of the highest-profile environmentalists in the country — that shows much smaller amounts of methane emissions associated with fracking, far less than environmentalists and the Environmental Protection Agency have

contended. . . "

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<http://knowledgecenter.csg.org/kc/content/preliminary-doe-study-finds-no-migration-fracking-chemicals-drinking-water>

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NL's regulations are at least as stringent as provinces like Alberta. Even Greenpeace Co-founder Patrick Moore has complimented Canada overall for its regulatory environment:

". . . Having visited Canada's oilsands extensively, and having worked on environmental issues for more than 40 years, I am at ease with the notion that the oil is produced under the best environmental regulations, labour conditions, human-rights laws, and First Nations participation in the world. . ."

<http://www.lfpress.com/2013/03/28/moore-greenpeace-co-founder-comes-out-in-favour-of-xl-pipeline>

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Given this context, we should proceed as we always do - with caution and care -- but we should not allow alarmism and misinterpretation of reports and science to slow progress in an industry that has the potential to greatly help our province's economy recover and grow.

Thank You for your time

-L. O'Brien