

To the Newfoundland and Labrador Hydraulic Fracturing Review Panel,

I am writing to explain a few of my concerns regarding the proposal to frack in Newfoundland and Labrador (NL).

The proposal to frack in NL will not only affect the West Coast of the island, but will potentially damage (either emotionally, physically or via pollution) the entire island, surrounding areas and the environment as a whole. Given such grave possibilities, it puzzles me as to why consultations have not been held Province-wide. I have personally attended public consultations on the West Coast in both Stephenville and Corner Brook, but have not yet seen many similar events held in other communities. Being from the West Coast myself -- now living in St. John's - - this is quite frustrating. Even in Stephenville and Corner Brook (communities relatively close to the proposed fracking areas) there have only been a limited number of consultations.

However, in the few consultations that have occurred, the majority of those in attendance seem to have been opposed to fracking on our island. With increased awareness and education, I think public opposition has only grown since. We have seen the damaging effects of fracking via viral videos, articles, scientific proof and public testimony. We do not wish the same fate upon our home. I do not wish this fate upon anyone's home (human, animal or any living being) and, though I long to see the already-affected communities restored, I know the contamination caused by fracking will be long-lasting and may not simply be repaired -- something I hope the review panel will keep in mind. Many areas (even those that once welcomed fracking) are now banning fracking (e.g. <http://keptapwatersafe.org/global-bans-on-fracking/>). Why should NL put itself at risk?

I also question just how economically beneficial fracking will be to those residing in the proposed fracking areas. There have been promises of job creation and wealth for locals, but, given the technical nature of the work (and other similar cases), it seems that many of the workers will need to be brought in from elsewhere. The structure of our communities and roadways must also be taken into consideration. The roads in several NL communities simply cannot withstand the increased activity brought on by such a project (thinking mainly of the abundance of tanker trucks required). What state will our roads be left in once the reserves run dry? Who will pay to fix them?

Of course, I cannot leave out the issue of climate change. The global scientific community is acutely aware of the existence of climate change (despite disbelievers) and has continually urged us to make the necessary changes (while there's still time) to avoid complete disaster. We know that most of the planet's fossil fuel reserves must remain untouched, yet we are still clinging to oil and gas as our main source of energy. In my opinion, fracking is a last-ditch effort to extract every bit of oil and gas possible, which runs in direct opposition to the warnings put forth by science. Furthermore, we know that natural gas is a finite resource. Therefore, even if we completely disregard the climate change argument (which I do not suggest we should), it seems only logical that we focus on developing accessible and affordable renewable energy while there is still time to do so correctly.

This letter outlines only some of the reasons that I wish to see the moratorium on submissions to frack continued/extended (with the ideal outcome being a fracking ban), but I believe it offers more reasons than enough.

Regards,
S. Fitzpatrick