

Press Release

June 9, 2016

To: Media outlets

From: Marion Sampson, Chair, Port au Port/Bay St. George Fracking Awareness Group

Re: Newfoundland and Labrador Hydraulic Fracturing Review Panel Report

Date: June 9, 2016

After three and a half years of persistent effort to bring public awareness to the high risks associated with hydraulic fracturing, the Port au Port/Bay St. George Fracking Awareness Group feels vindicated by the report of the Review Panel released on May 31, 2016.

Although the Review Panel did not recommend the implementation of a legislated ban on hydraulic fracturing, the continuation of the “pause” in accepting applications involving hydraulic fracturing in Western Newfoundland is highly significant.

“The cautionary tone of the Review Panel’s conclusions substantiates the major concerns identified by our group and the general public. The 85 recommendations address a long list of issues and the 17 red-stage recommendations that must be implemented before the “pause” can be lifted are critical. It is our understanding these recommendations will take years to implement. So, the “pause” will be with us for the long term.”, states Marion Sampson, chair of the Fracking Awareness Group.

“Our goal is to have a legislated ban on hydraulic fracturing. We are confident this will happen at some point. As the recommendations are implemented, we believe more information will become available to the province’s citizens that will support the need for a legislated ban. It is important to note legislated bans already exist in other jurisdictions and that Scotland’s parliament implemented a ban quite recently.”, continues Sampson.

When the Review Panel was constituted in 2014, the Fracking Awareness Group was alarmed because 3 of the 5 panel members had previously made public statements supporting hydraulic fracturing. Sampson says our Group was very pleased to hear Dr. Ray Gosine, chair of the Review Panel, state that the 85 recommendations were unanimously supported by the 5 panel members. Sampson says this unanimous support adds strength to the Review Panel’s conclusions.

Graham Oliver, communications committee member, states, “It is gratifying to observe the Review Panel attended to the concerns voiced by our Group and members of the general public. Whether it was the hundreds of written submissions or the dozens of presentations made at the public consultations, the Review Panel listened carefully and acknowledged the concerns expressed. The outcome of this public process is by and large positive although we don’t yet have a legislated ban on hydraulic fracturing.”

The work conducted by the Port au Port/Bay St. George Fracking Awareness Group would not have been possible without the support of thousands of citizens in Western Newfoundland and the rest of the province. The Fracking Awareness Group extends thanks to all those who participated in the public engagement and to those who supported the Group in various ways.

“We would be remiss if we did not thank the 5 members of the Review Panel for their efforts. The report produced by the Review Panel is thorough and professional. Our voices were heard.”, says Sampson.

Marion Sampson adds, “We will wait for the provincial government to study the recommendations, then determine our next course of action. It was good to hear Minister Coady reiterate the need for social license in order for hydraulic fracturing to occur in the province. Our Group is certain such social license will never exist. However, our vigilance is undiminished. We are not going away.”

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