



Fracking awareness group representatives holding information sessions



[Frank Gale](#)

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Graham Oliver says his organization is begrudgingly participating in the upcoming external panel review on hydraulic fracturing (fracking).



Wayne Hounsell, left, and Graham Oliver, both of the Port au Port/Bay St. George Fracking Awareness Group, are holding sessions to go over the submission process for the external panel review on fracking.
Frank Gale/The Western Star

During a session Thursday at Kindale Library to go over the submission process for the review, Oliver said the Port au Port/Bay St. George Fracking Awareness Group sees the panel as unfair and unbalanced because it doesn't have any members representing human health, the fishery or tourism.

He said there is no representative on the panel from the west coast of the province, which will be affected the most if the controversial gas extraction method is permitted. He's also concerned there are no aboriginal or women members.

While Nova Scotia had 12 members on its review panel, said Oliver, Newfoundland and Labrador only has a five-member panel. While Nova Scotia had 11 public consultations, only two will take place in this province, one in

Stephenville and the other in Corner Brook.

What is really bothersome for Wayne Hounsell, another group member, is that three members of the panel have already publicly stated they're in favour of hydraulic fracturing.

Oliver said it's irksome the only two public consultations are taking place in mid-summer, which he considers a poor time to conduct public meetings. He said there has only been one paid ad in each of The Western Star and The Telegram and one announcement by government about the panel review.

The date of the public consultations hasn't been announced — all the awareness group knows is that it will take place sometime after July 15.

June 1 at noon is the deadline for written submissions if a person wants to present to the panel. The group members are telling people to get out and make submissions because if there are none or very few, then the people have no voice.

Oliver questions why — given there are currently no applications to conduct hydraulic fracturing — government is still pushing ahead with this panel review on fracking.

He said provinces like Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Quebec have moratoria on fracking, while Ontario is also deciding considering a moratorium.

"We're the only jurisdiction on the eastern seaboard proceeding with a panel to determine whether or not to frack," Oliver said. "These jurisdictions have moratoria or a ban with health the biggest concern, and our panel doesn't have anyone on health."

Hounsell said the geology of Newfoundland is extremely complicated and it would be difficult to do unconventional oil and gas extraction.

The group will continue to hold sessions at Kindale Library on Thursdays from 4-5 p.m. until

June 1.

<http://nlhfrp.ca/submit-feedback-to-the-panel/submissions/>