

May 31, 2016

Fracking panel should have recommended a permanent ban: NDP

NDP Leader Earle McCurdy is disappointed the Hydraulic Fracturing Review Panel did not recommend a formal moratorium on fracking more like the ones in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Instead, the Panel recommended that government continue to “pause” fracking pending further study of the area’s unique geology, and because a fracking project would not be viable in the current economy’s low oil price regime.

McCurdy said that while the Panel identified the serious impacts of fracking across North America, including gas leaks, earthquakes, stress on water supplies and water contamination, the significance of these risks on the public was not reflected in robust recommendations.

“The environmental risks and the potential adverse impacts on tourism, fisheries and agriculture outweigh the relatively few (30-40) long term jobs fracking would create,” McCurdy said.

“The Panel said fracking would not be a 'game-changer' in terms of the province's fiscal position, but it might very well be a game-changer in a negative way in terms of our natural environment.”

McCurdy says the panel’s report focuses more on economic viability than the environmental, health, local industry risks posed by fracking.

“The Report gives lip service to the environmental and human health risks that the NDP and many others described in submissions to the Panel. It also gives lip service to the threat to local fisheries and tourism in the area,” he said.

“But the real bottom line for the Panel seems to be that fracking would not currently be economically viable. The market shouldn’t dictate whether or not this practice goes ahead sometime in the future. Our magnificent natural environment on the west coast of the province should not be jeopardized as soon as the price of oil goes up high enough to warrant production.”

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