

'It's playing Russian roulette': Fracking recommendations met with opposition

By Lukas Wall, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jun 01, 2016 2:44 PM NT Last Updated: Jun 01, 2016 8:45 PM NT

The Newfoundland and Labrador Hydraulic Fracturing Review Panel ran into some opposition Tuesday night at a public forum held in Port au Port East Tuesday.

- [Fracking not 'a game changer' for N.L., says independent report](#)
- [Minister announces fracking review panel](#)

The panel's review suggested a continuation of the "pause" in fracking in the province, but many of the close to 200 people in attendance wanted a complete and outright ban.

"I certainly don't want to see fracking happen in western Newfoundland, in Newfoundland, period, for that matter," said Port au Port East Deputy Mayor Jim Cashin.

Cashin said a pause is better than the alternative, but he would have preferred to see a full ban on fracking.

"I think it's playing Russian roulette with our water supply, our clean air, with our clean lands, with everything connected to our environment," he said.

Cashin said he felt his community was slighted by the recommendation of a buffer zone to protect Gros Morne National Park.

"It seems a little disrespectful, in a way, to single out one area as warranting that special consideration and the rest are too bad, so sad," he said.

Cashin said he sees fracking as a risky process, and that the town has nothing to gain, financially or otherwise, from a fracking project.

Support necessary

The panel's findings stated that any future fracking projects in the province would require the support of nearby communities, and that leaves Graham Oliver, spokesperson for Port au Port/Bay St. George Fracking Awareness Group, hopeful for the future.

"I'm cautiously pleased with the report, in that there are a number of recommendations in there that are show stoppers, and I think it lays the groundwork for government to implement a ban on hydraulic fracturing," Oliver said.

He would have also preferred a full ban and pointed to other jurisdictions, like Germany, that have already implemented significant restrictions on hydraulic fracturing.

Oliver said the panel have included a number of expensive and time-consuming recommendations that should be followed before fracking should be considered, however, providing an easy out for government.

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