

A Chara, Date: -----

I am sure you are aware of recent developments in both Roscommon and Leitrim County Councils regarding a ban or moratorium on the process known as Hydraulic Fracturing in those counties. Bundoran and Donegal town councils have both voted for a ban on "Fracking". The Northern assembly in NI voted 49 to 30 on December 6th for a moratorium on Fracking.

I am asking you, as a representative of the people of county Sligo to call for a motion to ban Fracking in Sligo.

My concerns about hydraulic fracturing are as follows:

The EPA in the US has now publicly stated that Hydraulic fracturing was the cause of pollution in drinking water supplies in Wyoming. High levels of benzene were found in drinking wells near Pavilion Wyoming. Benzene is a known carcinogenic compound and would have a devastating effect on our agriculture and food industry and export if found in the food chain. (just think of "Spanish cucumbers"- all it took was a rumour to devastate a whole industry). Income from agriculture and food industry at present is estimated to be 24 billion euro per annum. Due to rising world population the outlook for the food industry is very good, and Ireland is placed very favourably in food production due to its grass based production system, water availability, good animal welfare standards

Gas companies pull **water directly from the local aquifer** for their process. **2.5 million** gallons of water are used to frack each well. In a region where we already experience drinking water shortages (and in rare incidents contamination) on a regular basis – where is all this water going to come from? And who is going to clean up the flow back / waste water. The practice of storing it in open pits as is common practise in the US seems very risky given the high rainfalls and floods Ireland has experienced in recent years.

Richard Moorman from Tamboran publicly stated that no chemicals would be used in the process in Ireland. He has since admitted that Tamboran did not submit to the CER on September 28th deadline a submission for chemical free fracturing as he felt that the EPA and any EIAs (Environmental impact assessments) carried out would be sufficient to safeguard the health and safety of the public. Minister Pat Rabbitte has announced that Aberdeen University will carry out an EIA for the EPA which in my view is unacceptable as Aberdeen University is heavily funded by the oil and gas industry.

Tourism Or Fracking – it is a case of one or the other! Revenue from tourism amounts to aprox. 5 Billion Euro per annum. Estimated revenue from Fracking over 15 years amounts to 15 billion. Tourism provides sustainable incomes to local people and cannot be relocated. The north West to date has showcased how environmentally responsible tourism can be developed. We have the highest number of accredited eco businesses on the island of Ireland (24 Out 50 in Ecoescape Ireland 2007, International recognition by World Tourism Council 2007 of the Greenbox Project (Finalist for Destination award with Great Barrier Reef). If carefully managed the benefits of (Eco) tourism will last forever. The exploitation of shale gas by means of hydraulic fracturing has a maximum life span of 3 to 20 years.

92% of the people who visit Ireland find the beauty and unspoiled scenery important. During the initial drilling, well pad sizes of approximately 20 acres are necessary. Multiple wells are necessary and will be spaced to a ratio of **10-20 wells per square mile**. So we are talking about heavy industrialisation. The visual impact alone will spell the end of tourism, let alone the threat of pollution of fishing lakes or the Shannon river system.

Unacceptable levels of **noise** will occur for at least a year during drilling at levels of 80db at 200 feet.

Truck traffic will destroy an already very stretched road infrastructure. Who is going to foot the bill for maintenance of our road network? We could see a minimum of between **1.82 million** and **3.17 million** truck visits. (Based on a minimum of between 163 and 186 well pads).

The lifespan of a well is approximately 7 years. What happens when shale gas production is no longer profitable. Who is going to clean up? Who is going to pay for it?

Job creation. According to the Marcellus shale gas development report there are 11.53 annual temporary jobs per well, they do not carry over from year to year. After drilling, when the well is in production there will be 0.17 full time permanent jobs. These jobs are heavily dependent on exploration and well creation – once production has started at a well, nearly all of the industry jobs are phased out, as maintenance of producing wells requires only a few workers to attend each well . Certainly no worth risking the loss of existing and sustainable jobs in tourism, agriculture and food production .

Ireland's unique settlement structure means that there are no vast expanses of unpopulated countryside as in the US, and line development in rural areas means that instead of "clusters" of dwellings concentrated in one area, we have housing spread all over rural areas. Many of these dwellings have private wells, or are connected to small water schemes. Pollution of wells and water schemes is a very real risk.

An element of this Government's policy is to "turn Ireland into a net exporter of gas". What this means is that Bord Gais must bid against buyers in other countries to secure gas from Irish on and offshore fields. Ireland's licensing terms do not require oil companies to sell gas at a reduced rate to Irish customers, so that if the international price of gas were to double, Irish consumers would have to pay double, even if that gas comes from Irish fields.

To conclude. I strongly urge Sligo County Council to inform themselves on all aspects of hydraulic fracturing , and also take on board the views not just from the oil companies ,but also from the citizens of the area. It is the citizens whose lives will be directly and adversely affected by this process.

Signed -----

Name: -----

Address:
