



Information letter for those to whom fracking matters and updates on the website FFI

Thanks to all for your contribution

contact: ineke@frackingfreeireland.org

visit: www.frackingfreeireland.org

Fracking Ireland - Business Group Accept €20,000 From Tamboran

No Fracking Ireland regret to learn that Manorhamilton Enterprise Forum have decided to take €20,000 from Tamboran Resources, the Australian/Canadian fracking company who wish to drill thousands of wells to extract shale gas in the north west region.

We understand this money is being used by the business forum to fund plans for a hotel in Manorhamilton town. Manorhamilton Enterprise Forum claim to be working at promoting tourism, fracking runs counter to this worthy objective. Only weeks prior to this announcement by the Manorhamilton business group, visiting German geoscientist and politician Helmut Fehr appealed to locals not to sell out to this highly controversial and damaging industry stating, "Don't take the company's money it is like selling your soul."



Livetrاد.com session and No Fracking Ireland, April, Carrick-on-Shannon

Read full article

<http://www.indymedia.ie/article/101786>

EVENTS and other small CAMPAIGN news

Received via web FFI

From: Rossport Solidarity Camp <rossportsolidaritycamp@gmail.com>

Subject: June Gathering in Mayo- linking community struggles

Message Body:

Greetings!

The seventh annual Rossport Solidarity Camp gathering is taking place in Erris, Co.Mayo from the 1st-4th June. You are invited to take part in workshops/discussions, skillshares, music and fun!

Want to share skills you've learned through your campaign against fracking, or learn from other people's campaigns? You are invited to this years gathering to share experiences and link with other community campaigners from around Ireland.

As the current government ignores the pain being inflicted by their policies on the ground and democracy seems to slip further from sight, communities are organising themselves to show that another Ireland is possible. Rossport Solidarity Camp is hosting a weekend for people from different communities to meet up, exchange stories and experiences, and network. There is a lot we can share and learn from each other!

Could you come and talk about your campaign? Can you share any of your campaign group's experiences?

Some ideas for workshops/skills that could be shared:

- How to deal with the mainstream media and social media
- Sustaining campaigns/how to keep up the struggle and take care of ourselves
- Group disputes/campaign splits (how do we keep working together?)
- What is Solidarity? (inc. some experiences of the camp in Mayo, relationship to local community)
- Policing/ dealing with gardai
- An open, non-judgemental discussion on using 'direct action' in our campaigns
- Ireland's licensing terms for natural resources
- The current economic situation and austerity
- Skills for getting the word out about your campaign to the public (outreach)
- Campaign updates: Each campaign gets 10-20 minutes to introduce what their campaign is all about

We are open to suggestions! Let us know if you have any other workshop ideas, or if you'd like to run one of the ones we've suggested.

Come for the workshops, stay for the fun! There will be a couple bands and DJs, and hopefully a session around the fire one night, so bring your instruments!! Workshops will run Saturday, Sunday, and part of Monday.

If you can't make it up to Mayo yourself but you would like to help out, please help us publicise the event by printing up posters and fliers and posting them up wherever you can! Find poster [here](#).

Thanks, and please get in touch if your campaign or group is interested in participating in the weekend, and hopefully we'll see lots of old and new faces!

All the best from everyone at the camp.

CALL FOR HELP

Michael Mc Evoy mickeymcevoy@yahoo.com

Having secured the use of the Blackbox Arts Centre, Cathedral Quarter, Belfast for a Belfast not for \$hale fundraiser on Fri' 17th August we now really need musicians, bands and comedians to perform on the night. Anyone with any contacts or ideas can contact me at mickeymcevoy@yahoo.com. We also need volunteers to help on the night selling raffle tickets, covering the door etc. All help appreciated, Thanks

News from Good Energies Alliance Ireland (GEAI) info [goodenergiesalliance@gmail.com]
The Joint Oireachtas Committee on Communications, Natural Resources and Agriculture has agreed to accept a submission from GEAI at a meeting after the EPA preliminary report is published. It is likely that the EPA and Tamboran will also make submissions at this meeting. GEAI would welcome suggestions for this submission.

Offer from: Frack Off <info@frack-off.org>
: **Free Graphic Design for Anti-Fracking Groups**

Evening!

The graphic designer who made this posh map for us: <http://frack-off.org.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/myedit1502.jpg> has asked us to offer his free services to every anti-fracking/anti-unconventional gas group we know of.

So here is his email: james.e.kenny@googlemail.com

♪

Abuse him!

FO x

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Web: frack-off.org Facebook: Frack Off (UK) Twitter: frack_off

This consultation might be worth a look:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/consultations/7eap_en.htm

lets keep in contact online.

Every Wednesday night BelfastNotFor\$hale should meet up online and chat.

Meet up in chat room on
www.notforshale.com

Michael Cairns nautical_9@hotmail.com

INVITATION

I received this invitation - brtirl@eircom.net - via web FFI and if you wish you can join/respond (Ineke)

I send you our invitation to network below. It is an attempt of bringing the activist groups in Ireland together. So far apart from us (awken ireland) following have responded postively

The Woodland league

Fis Nua

Occupy Galway

We are hoping for some more positive relies so we can create some synergie to change the fortunes of this country around.

We are a working group within the "Awaken Ireland Movement" which, briefly, is the following: "A positive, solutions-focused movement, bringing the people of Ireland together at local level, to create and reach consensus on a program for a better future for Ireland".

We are witnessing the decline of Ireland in many ways. To name just a few:
The debt burden is steadily increasing and the ordinary citizen is burdened with the costs in form of new taxes and charges.
The welfare of unsecured bondholders is put before the welfare of the people.
The state assets are being sold off.
Our nation's sovereignty is being given away to centres of power removed from the people.
The natural resources are being practically given away.

At present we are all chipping away on separate issues in our different corners of resistance to the situation while the underlying cause is becoming clearer for all to see. It is the removal of power from the people of Ireland into the hands of a political class that implements, not the will of the people but the agenda of powerful vested interests like the international banking cartel, the multinationals and those who want to transform the sovereign nations of Europe into a Super state which is run by unelected bureaucrats who are not answerable to the people of these countries.

The upcoming referendum on the Fiscal Compact Treaty puts the question of where Ireland is heading squarely in front of all of us. There are only two answers to this question. As a nation, are we continuing on the road we are on with, of further integration into the current system - with more austerity and less sovereignty, or do we have the courage to turn our fortunes around by saying "NO" to further erosion of our sovereignty and start to rebuild our economy and our future.

The campaign for a YES vote is already under way in the mass media with the usual fear-mongering that the world will end if we vote NO.

What we feel is required of us, as concerned groups, is to come together to promote a NO vote and put before the people our views of why this is required. If we can pool our energies in a way which respects the difference among us, without trying to impose our ideas on others, without leaders, in order to put our views to the public about the referendum and why a NO vote is necessary for the survival of an independent Ireland we can make a difference. If we can work together in say, a "National People's Sovereignty Network" we can organize, together, a variety of actions like: petitions, demonstrations, leaflets and information evenings.

We would also hope that this network will only be the first step in building unity and that it will continue after the referendum.

If you are interested pls reply and I will invite you to join a yahoo group that we have set up as a communication/discussion platform.

Hoping to hear from you,
National People's Sovereignty Network working group
<http://news-beacon-ireland.info/>

EU EDUCATED BY SCHOOLGIRL

From: BanFracNow <dont-reply@www.banfracnow.com>
Date: 01 май 2012 17:15:17 Гриинуич+0300
To: borislav.sandov@gmail.com
Subject: New Blog Entry: Schoolgirl wins chance to address MEPs with anti-fracking VDO

Leon Adam Hard has just blogged.

Schoolgirl wins chance to address MEPs with anti-fracking VDO

Lancashire schoolgirl wins chance to address MEPs with anti-fracking video
An 11-year-old schoolgirl travels to Brussels after posting a video on YouTube criticising shale gas extraction

An 11-year-old schoolgirl from Lancashire recently returned from Brussels where she addressed MEPs on the controversial subject of shale gas extraction by hydraulic fracturing, or "fracking", as it is now more popularly known. Tara Choudhury, a pupil at Millfield Science and Performing Arts College in Thornton-Cleveleys, won the chance to visit the European parliament after posting a video on YouTube

in which she explained why fracking should not be allowed to proceed in her local area. She was chosen as one of five winners of the "Have Your Say on Sustainability" contest being jointly run by Eurostar and the Young People's Trust for the Environment

(YPTE), a charity which "encourages young people's understanding of the environment". The competition was open to 10-18 year olds and asked entrants to record a video of "you telling us your views on protecting the environment". In an interview with the Blackpool Gazette published today, she said: I

first heard about fracking when I spotted the equipment being built in the fields near my house. I wondered what it was all about and asked my teacher at school. He gave me a video explaining about fracking and the effect it had over in America. It really concerned me so when I heard about this competition I decided to make a short film about the prospect of shale gas mining and the impact it could have on the local community... The Committee on Climate Change said the consumption and extraction of shale gas go against our world climate goals – can we break a promise as important as that? Most of the UK is in drought – won't this process put pressure on our precious water supply, as well as potentially contaminating it with toxic chemicals?

YPTE has posted a video of all five winners travelling to Brussels and addressing MEPs. It has also posted videos of Tara's fellow competition winners; Alana Muis, 12, talking about food miles; Abbie Barnes, 15, on palm oil; Liam Kelly, 13, on sustainable travel; and Simon Winchcombe, 13, on water use. It

is interesting to see that fracking, in particular, has already become a debating point in schools. In the US, where fracking has been commonplace in some regions for a decade or more, a battle for young hearts and minds has been raging for a while. Last year, for example, it was revealed that a gas extraction company was giving out colouring books to schools

which extolled the virtues of fracking via the friendly face of "Talisman Terry, your friendly Fracosaurus". Cuadrilla Resources, the company which is seeking to frack for shale gas in Lancashire, says on its website that it is already conducting "school information sessions" in the local area. "To frack, or not to frack?" is becoming one of the defining environmental debates of our age. It is good to see, therefore, Tara Choudhury leading the youthful vanguard of those opposed to shale gas extraction. But will we now see a class mate step forward and defend the technology with equal passion? (NB: Let's all remember that Tara is just 11 years old, so please can we keep this debate respectful and mature? Many thanks in advance.)

Click the link below to read the entry:

<http://www.banfracnow.com/blogs/item/schoolgirl-wins-chance-to-address-meps-with-anti-fracking-vdo>

EVENT CANCELLED

26 April 2012
Reporter Antoine Simon
Dear all,

I realise I let this discussion pending for too long and since nothing is really happening now, I wanted to confirm, in case you still had doubts, **that the conference of the 9th of May was very sadly cancelled.** The reason why I did not keep you posted since my last email is because there were still some discussions within the Greens about a potential event that could still be organised on the 10th of May with interested campaigners and citizens but, again, the deadline was definitely too close to take the risk of asking you to come and not to be able to organise the convergence that everybody expects. So finally, nothing will take place.

I can't tell you how sorry I am because I know many of you were looking forward to coming in Brussels and continuing the process of building a strong network of groups mobilised against the development of shale gas (---)

--- it very unfortunately took more time than everyone was expecting to find a common agreement on the agenda, on the budget, on who should be the focal point for the Greens, on the choice of the speakers, etc, etc... Many people were involved, maybe too many, which explains the constant delays that were taken weeks after weeks.

(---)

What I can tell you is that this disappointment should not stop us from moving on. For those who may not know, some Brussels-based NGOs very recently published (two days ago) a common statement gathering what we think the main impacts of shale gas are and what we call for in reaction (you can find the document enclosed, and the several translations that some groups very kindly and completely spontaneously drafted). The document was greatly supported by dozens of other NGOs and groups of citizens from all around Europe and even all around the Europe but we do realise that this is not an end in itself. This is essential to agree on one same set of positions and requests but we can't stop here and be satisfied with only this.

The statement is of course still opened to signatures and the more supported the document will be, the more powerful of course.

(SEE LAST NEWSLETTER FOR MENTIONED DOCUMENT)

Also, after that very intensive week in the European Parliament and the presentations of two different reports on shale gas that took place yesterday, I can tell you that your role will be key in the ability of European decision makers to decide on their position regarding shale gas. **Some conservative MEPs (in Austria, in France and in Germany notably) are forced to step back because the leaders and citizens of their region are pushing to stop the development of shale gas.** We need you to answer to these shale gas supporters by getting in touch with

their local offices in their constituencies, in order to show them that the local communities (in Poland notably) are not fine with this industry.

On top of that, we still have ideas of future events we would like to organise. We still need to clarify this internally but they definitely involve you at some points and I was hoping that this conference's failure would not discourage you from following us and us from following you.

My apologies once again,

Best,

Antoine Simon
Friends of the Earth Europe

IRISH NEWS

[UK fracking decision is "worrying"](#)

Leitrim Observer

Ballinaglera's **Dr Aedin McLoughlin, Director of Good Energies Alliance Ireland** said "It is extraordinary that a recommendation be made to continue fracking in Preece Hall, when clearly what is happening is a huge experiment with people and the ...

Full press release: visit GEAI website

E: goodenergiesalliance@gmail.com

W: www.goodenergiesalliance.com

The Irish Times - Wednesday, May 2, 2012

Expert lays out fracking ground rules

LORNA SIGGINS, Western Correspondent

A CANADIAN water resource engineer says that hydraulic fracturing – fracking – for gas should pose minimal risks if there is adequate regulatory control, political leadership and "straight talking" with communities.

However, Minister for Energy Pat Rabbitte should visit communities affected by fracking abroad before making up his mind on the issue, Dr David Manz of Manz Engineering Ltd and the University of Calgary has said.

Dr Manz, who is speaking on the subject in Galway, Cork and Dublin this week, said that the Commission for Energy Regulation also needs to "get tuned in", given the North American experience with "regulatory challenges" to date.

<http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/ireland/2012/0502/1224315453736.html>

Why can't we all make our fracking minds up?

As a nation, we love to contradict ourselves



FOR FRACK'S SAKE: Protesters

WE'RE a bit different, aren't we? It's a good thing too. We stand out from the rest of the world.

Right now, there are many in rural Ireland who are furious at the notion of fracking being permitted in Ireland. And quite right they are. It does desperate damage to the environment and the damage it causes is simply not worth it, despite the world's dwindling energy resources.

But hold on. Are some of the same people not prepared to march on the Dail to demand the right to cut turf in areas where the environment will be damaged by such activity? Yes they are. Welcome to Ireland.

<http://www.sundayworld.com/columnists/paddy-murray.php?aid=11176>

Fracking will make guinea pigs of communities

I WOULD like to comment on the release of the Government report on the issue of hydraulic fracturing ('fracking').

While this report investigated the links between hydraulic fracturing and earthquakes, it did not investigate what impact fracking would have on water pollution, air pollution and radiation levels.

While the headlines screamed that 'Fracking is safe', this is not what the report said. The reality is hydraulic fracturing is a dirty process requiring an average of 5.5 million gallons of water per well mixed with a cocktail of highly toxic chemicals.

If you want proof that fracking is neither clean nor safe, look at the USA, where there has been thousands of incidents of water contamination since fracking began. In one incident reported by Bamberger & Oswald in the journal *New Solutions*, a spillage of frack fluids into an adjacent field killed 17 cows in one hour.

In February, the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health in Belfast concluded there is "insufficient current evidence to confirm that all the potential risks can be suitably reduced and/or managed within acceptable levels".

If fracking is allowed to go ahead, our political leaders are condemning communities living near gas-drilling operations to become guinea pigs in the study of environmental toxicology.

ROSS BROWN
Green Party in Northern Ireland

Comment by a campaigner:

well said Ross

the Bel Tele retorts to all anti Frack comments it seems.

They must have been short of pro fracking comments being sent in so the section editor happily stepped into to fill the void and replied as such.

[Let's keep an open mind on gas claims](#)

Belfast Telegraph

This is one time when the glacial pace of Northern **Ireland's** planning process may be a boon, rather than a hindrance. Concerns over the environmental impact of **fracking** - itself a hideous word - have been voiced in other parts of the world and deserve ...

[Shale gas could be towerful ally if we are to stop the lights going out](#)

Express.co.uk

By Tracey Boles BILLED as the 21st-century equivalent of North Sea oil, with the potential to turn the Lancashire coast into an unlikely new Arabia, **shale gas** is said to be abundant under the Pennines, Wales, Scotland and Northern **Ireland**.

[Why fracking is still a hot topic](#)

Belfast Telegraph

The company forecasts it can produce up to 50 years worth of daily gas consumption from the field by hydraulic fracturing - or **fracking** - providing natural gas security for supply in Northern **Ireland** for at least 20 years. **Fracking** allows companies to ...

Perhaps fracking is a good idea after all ...

News that families here have the least amount of money left in their pockets at the end of the month isn't overly surprising.

It's not that average salaries in Northern Ireland are much lower than elsewhere in the UK.

But one factor which tends to get overlooked is the extra we pay for energy — whether it be petrol, diesel, heating oil, electricity or gas.

The fact that we're at a disad-

vantage when it comes to energy bills rubs salt into the wounds of an already bloodied consumer and shines a light back on the issue of fracking.

This means of extracting gas from shale has plenty of unknowns surrounding it, but after spending just shy of £95 to fill up the car recently, it came to mind that it certainly deserves a bit more investigation.

Either that or I need to get my bike out.

[Perhaps fracking is a good idea after all ...](#)

Belfast Telegraph

It's not that average salaries in Northern Ireland are much lower than elsewhere in the UK. But one factor which tends to get overlooked is the extra we pay for energy - whether it be petrol, diesel, heating oil, electricity or gas.

[Fracking boss vows to cut power bills](#)

Belfast Telegraph

In an exclusive interview, the Canadian told the Belfast Telegraph: "This will be safe, clean energy and it will supply Northern **Ireland** for 50 years." He said he intends to move to **Ireland** to personally oversee the cross-border **fracking** operation, ...

CORRESPONDENCE – LETTERS

It's quite clear Terri, fracking will harm environment

IN RESPONSE to Terri Jackson 'Fracking will not harm the environment' (April 23) I would like to point out that Tamboran has a licence to drill in the beautiful west Fermanagh area to explore for shale gas. Tamboran's chief executive officer Richard Moorman has said that up to 100 well pads may be needed to drill for gas. Pads can have between eight and 16 wells per pad. Let's forget for a moment about the dangers of earthquakes, toxic chemicals used, noise pollution and the effects on the environment that comes with fracking

and concentrate on well pad size. Let's look at the modest figure of 100 well pads as Mr Moorman has stated is needed in Fermanagh alone. A pad varies in size but we can expect them to be between four and six acres. One hundred multiplied by a six-acre pad is 600 acres. Now with fracking we need new roads and infrastructure to cater for this very heavy industrial process. We can expect a large scale road network that allows for heavy machinery – 600 acres * (1 square mile/640 acres) = 0.9375 square miles

Remember, this is before we take into consideration the extended road network on top of the 600 acres or one square mile. We can expect the total area size levelled to be as much as 800 acres. So all in all we are talking about an area greater than the size of north Belfast levelled, concreted over and industrialised in rural west Fermanagh which relies heavily on tourism and agriculture. So my question to Terri Jackson is "do you still think that fracking will not harm the environment"?

M CAIRNS
Belfast BT15

Reporter: Michael Mc Evoy mickeymcevoy@yahoo.com

I was very happy to read the editorial in this paper on Fri' 27th entitled "Let's keep an open mind on gas claims".

Summed up by this quote "what really needs to happen is that a proper, in-depth debate on this issue is held free from emotion and based on scientific evidence."

I was then dismayed along with many hundreds of others to read the huge article two days later by Liam Clarke, which was nothing but an effective press release for the gas company concerned Tamboran plc. Quotes from Tamboran's Richard Moorman were included in the article. This quote is in relation to people like me or his "environmental critics"... "These guys claim to do all this research but they just watch Gasland (an award-winning US documentary which gives the case against fracking), 95% of the criticisms are from the film."

This is factually incorrect and slanderous. At no point does Liam Clarke challenge Mr Moorman or use any skills of investigative journalism. Mr Moorman is then quoted "This will be safe, clean energy and it will supply Northern Ireland for 50 years"

Again unchallenged by Liam Clarke. This shale gas is arguably far from safe, nor is it clean (with a carbon footprint worse than coal) and the claim that it will supply N.I for 50 years is again open to investigation.

I am sorry to say I do not believe that there is the will in the Belfast Telegraph to report on this issue in a manner "free from emotion and based on scientific evidence". If there was this article by Liam Clarke would not have made it past the editor and to print.

Liam Clarke goes on to write..."He (Richard Moorman) will not be using chemicals, something which involved pumping the water at higher pressure. He will recycle all water used afterwards using technology developed by South Western Energy"

This is poor journalism. To simply reprint the unsubstantiated claims of the CEO of the Gas company and not challenge him or ask questions is not journalism based on "scientific evidence". To frack without chemicals has never been done anywhere- Globally! N.I would be the guinea pig. When asked by members of the community in N.I where have you fracked without chemicals before, Moorman references South West Energy. This is a company with lawsuits pending against it due to contaminated groundwater in local communities where it has

operated. The water that returns to the surface is a witches brew of chemicals including known carcinogens Benzene and ethyl Benzene. By recycling this witches brew he simply means reinjecting it into the earth in more frack wells. Maybe you want to explain that process to your readers Liam???

Parker Waichman Alonso LLP announces that they have filed a lawsuit against Southwest Energy Production Company and its parent, Southwestern Energy Company, both of Houston Texas, on behalf of 13 families in Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania. The Plaintiffs allege that their water wells have been contaminated due to gas drilling operations being conducted by Southwest Energy Production Company

Safe? Clean?

How about now giving those opposed to plans to frack N.I a platform to express their arguments? We have many positive alternatives to this industry that can create up to 30,000 sustainable local jobs in the short term and reduce our energy bills at the same time. The Green New Deal!

Michael McEvoy, Belfast

With respect to fracking, earthquakes are the least of our worries. Fracking involves drilling 1,800 metres down, then horizontally the same distance. Water, sand and chemicals are forced down the hole, the pressure splitting the shale and releasing the gas. The gas forces 40 per cent of the liquid back up the shaft, now contaminated with volatile chemicals and harmful carcinogenic metals.

The really negative effects come from contamination of water and soil, as seen in Pennsylvania in 2010: sick animals and people, contaminated crops and air pollution. The promised job creation will be outweighed by job losses in agriculture and tourism: crops will be blacklisted, property devalued and landscapes scarred.

An outright ban on fracking, as in France and Germany, is the only sensible answer.

Jill Scott

Mark Scott

Enniskillen, Northern Ireland

<http://www.independent.co.uk/opinion/letters/letters-fracking--only-a-ban-will-do-7654717.html>



THOUGHTS – OPINION



Campaigner:

Another technological boost in harvesting energy from bacteria. So frustrating when so many alternative solutions exist yet the powers that be keep doing all the absolute WRONG things:

http://www.kurzweilai.net/?utm_source=KurzweilAI+Weekly+Newsletter&utm_campaign=54fb9354fe-UA-946742-1&utm_medium=email

MOVIES- SONGS

Barlad, Romania (26th)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=awtTL-IUtpA>

Reporter Josee Gagnon, France

The committees against shale gas helped for the mobilization of the population

An estimated 250,000 people inched its way through downtown and onto Mount Royal Sunday afternoon in what was Quebec's largest-ever Earth Day march.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TIZFQOjVGNQ&feature=player_embedded

<http://vimeo.com/40837061>

J

osée Gagnon

Comité Mobilisation gaz de schiste Mont-Saint-Hilaire

Sous-comité Vigie-énergie

Against shale gas mobilisation committee, Mont-St-Hilaire, Québec, Canada

Vigie-Énergie sub-committee

From: Sandra Steingraber [mailto:ssteingraber@ithaca.edu]

Sent: Thursday, April 26, 2012 7:12 PM

Subject: DON'T FRACK with ANYBODY of WATER

Dear friends in Europe,

I think New York has finally created an anti-fracking public service announcement as artful as that of the Bulgarians.

The title is a play on words that highlights the fact that we are all 65 percent water by weight: "anybody" refers to any formation of water--like a lake or a river or an aquifer; "anybody" written as one word refers to a person.]

90 second version: <http://vimeo.com/40813535>

30 second version: <http://vimeo.com/40809767>

Feel free to distribute! And let me know what you think.

Kind regards,

Sandra

EU -NEW

UK: Ministers set to approve the extension of fracking

18/04/12 1

MINISTERS IN THE UK are set to approve the expansion of the practice of drilling for shale gas following recommendations contained in a government report.

<http://www.thejournal.ie/uk-ministers-set-to-approve-the-extension-of-fracking-420299->

Soaring Shell studies UK shale gas

By Emily Gosden

ROYAL Dutch Shell has signalled its interest in the fledgling UK shale gas market – but admitted disruption could be caused to people living near the resources if the controversial industry took off.

The Anglo-Dutch company made the comments as it reported soaring profits for the first three months of 2011, up 11pc to \$7.7bn (£4.7bn), on the back of high oil prices.

The results beat City forecasts, sending shares up 3.54½pc to £22.66½p. Profit growth was also driven by better operating performance and increased production, which helped to compensate for continued poor refining margins.

Peter Voser, Shell chief executive, said: “Our profits pay for Shell’s dividends and substantial investments in new energy projects, to ensure affordable, reliable energy supplies for our customers, which create value for our shareholders.” Shell increased its first-quarter dividend by 2pc to \$0.43.

Simon Henry, Shell’s chief financial officer, said it was “taking a look” at the potential for UK shale gas. Commercially recoverable reserves have yet to be proven, but Mr Henry said unproven estimates of 200 trillion cubic feet would constitute a “material play” Shell could not ignore.

“Strategically, we have an interest in any large resources around the world where we



Not in our back yard: fracking has sparked widespread protest

think we can be competitive. It’s in our back yard and we ought to be interested in a very large play,” he said.

However, the biggest challenge was that extracting shale

gas from the ground, through the controversial “fracking” process, would have a “significant impact” on nearby communities, he said. Fracking in Lancashire was suspended last year after it caused two earth tremors, but is expected to be given approval to resume within weeks.

Mr Henry said the fact that Europe was “a small continent with a lot of people” meant the industry was likely to develop more slowly than in the US.

Shell, which has bid £1.12bn for Mozambique explorer Cove Energy, also disclosed it would face a tax bill of about £124m for the transaction. It said it intended to sell \$4bn of assets this year.

ROMANIA

Shale Gas Search Divides Romania

Posted on [May 1, 2012](#) by [Graham OBrien](#)

Romanian prime minister Mihai Răzvan Ungureanu lost a confidence vote in parliament on Friday, April 27

Recent discoveries of natural gas deposits have become a disputed issue in Romania. After years of economic slowdown following the collapse of the Soviet Union, many look to the discovery of energy resources as a potential economic boom. Others are hesitant to embrace the news. Critics are concerned about the possible environmental ramifications of such a discovery, specifically in regard to the use of the controversial extraction method known as hydraulic fracturing.

A large percentage of Romania’s energy currently comes from neighboring Russia. Those supportive of domestic gas drilling see this as a means to push the nation toward energy independence.

<http://atlanticsentinel.com/2012/05/shale-gas-search-divides-romania/>

[Barlad, Romania \(26th\)](#)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=awtTL-IUtpA>

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The Romanian government felled (27th)

http://sofiaecho.com/2012/04/27/1816868_romanian-cabinet-felled-by-no-confidence-motion/bulletin

Reporter: Mark Johnston mjohnston@wwf.eu

<http://www.platts.com/RSSFeedDetailedNews/RSSFeed/NaturalGas/8236943>

German research institute launches shale gas information website
London (Platts)--30Apr2012/916 am EDT/1316 GMT

A major German research institute has launched a new website to inform debate about shale gas, researchers said Monday.

The shale gas industry, using "hydraulic fracking" techniques to stimulate gas production from shale rocks, has transformed the US gas industry in recent years, proving a massive boost to production. But shale is at a much earlier stage of development in Europe.

The GFZ German Research Center for Geosciences said it was hoping to provide information on this new industry with its "Shale Gas Information Platform."

The site contains articles from expert figures from research organizations, covering technical and environmental issues relating to shale gas.

"The experts of the SHIP network contribute factual information, scientific expertise and transparency to the sometimes controversial debate," they said.

The platform is funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research and the GFZ German Research Centre for Geosciences.

It is at: <http://www.shale-gas-information-platform.org>
--Alex Frolely, alex_frolely@platts.com

GLOBAL NEWS

CANADA

Jessica Ernst

April 26 & 27, 2012, for defendants to try to get paragraphs struck from the statement of claim (EnCana and Alberta govt) or completely thrown out of court (ERCB). the defendants have not yet filed statements of defence but encana gave ernst a page on their website in january 2012: [.http://www.encana.com/news-stories/in-the-news/encana-addresses-claims.html](http://www.encana.com/news-stories/in-the-news/encana-addresses-claims.html)

From Jessica Ernst.

"In particular, the **ERCB**, whose mission is to develop oil and gas "in a manner that is fair, responsible and in the public interest," was prepared to argue that it has "no duty of care" to a landowner with contaminated water."
Rights + Justice

Landmark fracking lawsuit starts with twist in Alberta

By **Andrew Nikiforuk** April 27, 2012 12:52 am

DRUMHELLER, ALBERTA: A landmark lawsuit against an energy giant and two Alberta government regulatory agencies concerning water well contamination by hydraulic fracturing started with an unusual twist in Alberta's Court of Queen's Bench yesterday.

Judge B. L. Veldhuis began the proceedings in a Drumheller courtroom attended by 20 landowners from across the province by admitting that she was going to do something unexpected: she then asked for a shorter **statement of claim**.

Jessica Ernst, a 54-year-old oil patch consultant and scientist from Rosebud, Alberta, is suing EnCana, one of the continent's largest unconventional gas producers, for negligence causing water contamination and the Alberta Energy Resources Conservation Board (ERCB), the province's energy regulator, for breaching the Charter of Rights.

The lawsuit alleges that the regulator "banished" Ernst, now a celebrated landowner in the province, from contact with the board after she publically spoke out about water well contamination and noise pollution.

In addition, the \$33-million lawsuit alleges that Alberta Environment, one of two agencies responsible for groundwater protection, failed to uphold its regulatory responsibilities.

The lawsuit effectively puts on trial the practice and regulation of hydraulic fracturing: the controversial blasting of coal, oil and shale formations with toxic chemicals, sand and water.

North America's fracking boom has increased natural gas supplies, lowered gas prices and weakened the bottom line of many gas companies. The poorly studied technology, which can also cause earthquakes, has sparked moratoriums, debates and regulatory investigations from New Brunswick to Wyoming due to concerns about groundwater contamination, air pollution and methane leaks.

Neither EnCana nor the Alberta regulators have fielded statements of defence on shallow fracking incidents that took place eight years ago during a frenzied coal-bed methane drilling boom in central Alberta.

Instead, lawyers for both EnCana and the ERCB came prepared to argue a variety of motions to dismiss the entire case or strike out entire paragraphs from Ernst's highly readable 73-page statement of claim as "inflammatory" and "embarrassing."

In particular, the **ERCB**, whose mission is to develop oil and gas "in a manner that is fair, responsible and in the public interest," was prepared to argue that it has "no duty of care" to a landowner with contaminated water.

Toronto lawyer **Murray Klippenstein**, who represents Ernst, agreed with the judge's request and says he will submit a shorter claim within a month. (Klippenstein, a no-nonsense litigator on critical justice issues, successfully represented the family of slain First Nation activist Dudley George against the Ontario government of Mike Harris.)

"We know that EnCana and the Board and the government did not like the detailed description of Jessica's case and were trying very hard to have parts removed," explained Klippenstein outside the courtroom.

"The judge wanted a more concise description and that can be easily provided."

The lawsuit alleges that an experimental and shallow drilling and fracking program into coal seams contaminated Ernst's water source with so much methane that she could light her tap water on fire.

"EnCana refused to address Ms. Ernst's concerns or answer her questions; failed to investigate Ms. Ernst's water contamination problem; refused to disclose the chemicals used in fracturing, drilling and servicing operations," adds the claim.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has linked fracking activity by EnCana to the contamination of groundwater in Pavillion, Wyoming. EnCana, which is losing money and shareholder confidence due to its extreme dependence on industrial scale shale gas plays, calls the EPA investigation flawed.

Landowners at the courthouse said they came to support Jessica Ernst as a champion of the public interest and groundwater protection.

"Jessica is doing what we all want to do but don't have the balls to stand up and do," said Shawn Campbell, a Ponoka area rancher who also has water contamination problems related to fracking. "Water is the key issue. If you don't have clean water what are you going to do? You won't live long."

Dairy farmer Jan Slomp, a board member of the National Farmer's Union, which has called for a moratorium on fracturing, also attended the first day of the trial because of his admiration for Ernst's courage.

"I'm here to support Jessica. This issue needs to be brought into the public arena. People are concerned and know something is wrong."

Ernst's case recently **received** a major boost from Alberta's Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner. For four years Alberta Innovates (formerly Alberta Research Council) refused to answer Ernst's repeated requests for the results of environmental testing on dozens of water wells near her home.

Adjudicator Teresa Cunningham ruled that the withholding of such public information was illegal. It not only ordered the government to release thousands of documents but also reimburse Ernst more than \$4,000 for information searches it did not conduct in good faith. The commissioner also ruled that the Alberta agency "had not established that it had conducted an adequate search for responsive records that might be in its control, but not its immediate possession."

Alberta has one of the worst records of public transparency in Canada, **according to** the Centre for Law and Democracy.

The lawsuit, which could change the way hydraulic fracturing is regulated, may take years to travel through the court system before justice is done.

Andrew Nikiforuk wrote the first stories on hydraulic fracturing and the Ernst Case for ROB Magazine and Canadian Business magazine.

<http://thetyee.ca/Blogs/TheHook/Rights-Justice/2012/04/27/FrackingLawsuit/>

Financial Times, April 24, 2012

Shale gas seen as unlikely bet for Russia

By Guy Chazan

Asked whether Europe could replicate the [US shale gas revolution](#), Alexander Medvedev, head of [Gazprom](#)'s export arm, cites an example from history.

"Trotsky dreamt that the Russian Revolution would spread to the rest of the world, including the US," he says. "Fortunately for world civilisation, it didn't."

It's the same, he adds, with shale. [Environmental opposition to fracking](#), exorbitant costs and high population density mean it will never catch on in Europe – at least not on anything like the scale seen in North America.

But others are less complacent. Speaking recently to lawmakers, Russia's president-elect Vladimir Putin says shale can "seriously transform the structure of the hydrocarbon market".

"Russian companies must address this now," he adds.

So far, the unconventional gas boom has had [little tangible impact on Gazprom](#).

The company controlled 27 per cent of Europe's gas market last year, and intends to increase that to 30 per cent by 2020. It also plans to boost exports to the European Union this year and raise prices by about 8 per cent.

But Gazprom's gas, which is indexed to the price of crude oil, is already expensive. It charges roughly \$13 per million British thermal units, while Henry Hub, the main US gas benchmark, driven to 10-year lows by the shale gas glut, is trading below \$2 per MMBTU.

With companies such as [Cheniere Energy](#) now planning to export US liquefied natural gas and price it off Henry Hub rather than crude, Gazprom's pricing policy could come under growing scrutiny.

Already, many of its customers want it to switch from oil-linked prices to "spot" prices in its long-term contracts.

"If the US starts exporting LNG to Europe and Asia, it gives [customers there] an argument to renegotiate their prices with Gazprom and Qatar, and they will do it," says Jean Abiteboul, head of Cheniere supply & marketing.

"But it's unclear if they'll be successful. I can't see Russia and Qatar giving up oil price indexation."

Mr Medvedev insists that the oil link is here to stay. "[Because] the liquidity of the gas market is so low, spot pricing can't give the right price signals, to suppliers or customers," he says. "We want predictable prices for the consumer."

Gazprom has already been affected by the shale gas surge – albeit indirectly. Like other gas producers such as Qatar and Nigeria, Russia had hoped to export large volumes of LNG to the US. In 2009, Gazprom predicted it would be supplying up to 10 per cent of the North American LNG market by 2020. However, as shale pushed the US gas market from deficit into surplus, it had to think again.

"Shale put unanticipated supply out there and removed what was expected to be a major source of demand," says Matthew Hagopian of lawyers Linklaters. "It's taken out an entire geographical region."

Dozens of LNG cargoes that were originally destined for the US market were diverted to Asia and Europe. That – combined with a recession-related fall-off in demand – drove down the spot price of gas in Europe to levels well below Gazprom's long-term contractual price.

Amid falling demand, customers who sought to reduce their imports of Russian gas were prevented by Gazprom's "take-or-pay" contracts, which oblige buyers to offtake minimum contracted volumes and fines them if they do not.

But after a consumer backlash, Gazprom was forced to make concessions.

In 2010 it struck a three-year deal with some of its biggest customers, including Eon Ruhrgas, agreeing to link up to 15 per cent of its sales to spot prices.

Gazprom announced in January that in its negotiations with a clutch of customers – including [GDF Suez](#), Wingas and [OMV](#) of Austria – it had agreed to a net price reduction of 10 per cent.

It also said it would let consumers take less gas than required under the original take-or-pay contracts.

Others are still not satisfied. Eon, [RWE](#) and Poland's PGNiG have all launched international arbitration proceedings against Gazprom to lower the prices in its gas contracts.

And in the long term, the pressure could continue to mount, as shale gas forces deeper changes to the global gas market.

One impact has been on China. A disagreement on price has stopped Russia and China signing a big gas supply deal.

Analysts say a key reason for the delay is China's growing awareness of its own shale gas resources, which could reduce its need for imports.

In Europe, too, countries such as Poland are hoping shale gas will help break its dependence on Gazprom. A recent report says Poland's recoverable shale gas reserves, combined with its conventional fields, are large enough to meet its domestic gas needs for up to 65 years.

Mr Medvedev compares the surge in US unconventional gas production with a "bubble", similar to the US dotcom boom. Yet it is likely that the long-term effect for Gazprom – and other big gas producers – will be anything but transitory.

REPORTS - RESEARCH

[Climate: "Shale Gas may be worse than coal" -Cornell University ...](#)

3 days ago ... Originally Posted by Tombo Seems like a sensible pragmatic report and policy decision: Fracking: drilling method 'to be extended' despite causing.

www.politics.ie/.../158195-climate-shale-gas-may-worse-than-...

EPA

The EPA's First Fracking Rules – Limited and Delayed (Pro Publica)

Release Date: 04/18/2012

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WASHINGTON – In response to a court deadline, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has finalized standards to reduce harmful air pollution associated with oil and natural gas production. The updated standards, required by the Clean Air Act, were informed by the important feedback from a range of stakeholders including the public, public health groups, states and industry. As a result, the final standards reduce implementation costs while also ensuring they are achievable and can be met by relying on proven, cost-effective technologies as well as processes already in use at approximately half of the fractured natural gas wells in the United States. These technologies will not only reduce 95 percent of the harmful emissions from these wells that contribute to smog and lead to health impacts, they will also enable companies to collect additional natural gas that can be sold. Natural gas is a key component of

the nation's clean energy future and the standards released today make sure that we can continue to expand production of this important domestic resource while reducing impacts to public health, and most importantly builds on steps already being taken by industry leaders.

Shocking Conflict of Interest: Private Water Companies Partner With Fracking Lobby

http://www.alternet.org/story/155065/shocking_conflict_of_interest_%3A_private_water_companies_partner_with_fracking_lobby?page=entire

Reporter: Geert de Cock

See the conclusions below of a study by North Carolina's Department of Environment as well as a link to the full study.

The key recommendation: **The ban on hydraulic fracturing and horizontal drilling should remain in effect until both standards and a strong compliance and enforcement program are in place.**

Geert De Cock
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Website: <http://www.foodandwaterwatch.org/europe/>

Begin forwarded message:

<http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/guest/denr-study>

New lead conclusion (emphasis added):

"After reviewing other studies and experiences in oil and gas-producing states, DENR has concluded that information available to date suggest that production of natural gas by means of hydraulic fracturing can be done safely as long as the right protections are in place. Production of natural gas by means of hydraulic fracturing can only be done safely in NC if the state adopt adequate safeguards inthe form of regulatory standards specifically adapted to condition in the state and invests sufficient resources in compliance and enforcement. Develop of appropriate standards will require additional information on North Carolina's geology and hydrogeology to identify conditions under which hydraulic fracturing and horizontal drilling can be done without putting the state's water resources at risk. **The ban on hydraulic fracturing and horizontal drilling should remain in effect until both standards and a strong compliance and enforcement program are in place.** Both of these are needed before issuing permits for hydraulic fracturing in North Carolina's shale formations. A Number of states have experience problems associated with natural gas exploration and development because the appropriate measures were not in place from the beginning -- forcing both the state and the industry to react after damage had already been done."

Old lead conclusion:

After reviewing other studies and experiences in oil and gas-producing states, DENR believes that hydraulic fracturing can be done safely as long as the right protections

are in place. It will be important to have those measures in place before issuing permits for hydraulic fracturing in North Carolina's shale formations. A number of states have experience problems associated with natural gas exploration and development because the appropriate measures were not in place from the beginning -- forcing both the state and the industry to react after damage had already been done.

Talk by Theo Colborn on chemicals used/produced in drilling/fracking

Dear All,

This talk by Theo Colburn which Sharyle sent is very important. (And for those of you who haven't heard of Theo Colburn, she is one of the heroes of the environmental health movement. See here:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theo_Colborn)

The talk covers air pollution from natural gas drilling (and fracking), and she makes the important point that the drilling, as distinct from the fracking, could be the source of much pollution that may be overlooked as people concentrate on the 'fracking' part of the equation.

But the talk also covers fracking chemicals.

She is addressing the US legal context but nevertheless it is important for us too!

Please take a look and circulate far & wide.

Best,

Lisette van Vliet, Ph.D.
Toxics Policy Advisor

Health & Environment Alliance (HEAL)

The Theo Colborn presentation discusses chemicals used in drilling/fracking. Theo Colborn is founder and president of the Endocrine Disruption Exchange.

www.endocrinedisruption.org

The Vimeo link presents the live talk,

<http://vimeo.com/40268145>

Thanks to Jessica.

[New Study Predicts Frack Fluids Can Migrate to Aquifers Within Years](#) by

Abrahm Lustgarten, May 1, 2012, *ProPublica*

Scientists have theorized that impermeable layers of rock would keep the fluid, which contains benzene and other dangerous chemicals, safely locked nearly a mile below water supplies. This view of the earth's underground geology is a cornerstone of the industry's argument that fracking poses minimal threats to the environment. But the study, using computer modeling, concluded that natural faults and fractures in the

Marcellus, exacerbated by the effects of fracking itself, could allow chemicals to reach the surface in as little as "just a few years." "Simply put, [the rock layers] are not impermeable," said the study's author, Tom Myers, an independent hydrogeologist whose clients include [2] the federal government and environmental groups. **"The Marcellus shale is being fracked into a very high permeability,"** he said. "Fluids could move from most any injection process." ... The models predict that fracking will dramatically speed up the movement of chemicals injected into the ground. Fluids traveled distances within 100 years that would take tens of thousands of years under natural conditions. And when the models factored in the Marcellus' natural faults and fractures, fluids could move 10 times as fast as that. Where man-made fractures intersect with natural faults, or break out of the Marcellus layer into the stone layer above it, the study found, "contaminants could reach the surface areas in tens of years, or less." **The study also concluded that the force that fracking exerts does not immediately let up when the process ends. It can take nearly a year to ease. As a result, chemicals left underground are still being pushed away from the drill site long after drilling is finished. It can take five or six years before the natural balance of pressure in the underground system is fully restored,** the study found. Myers' research focused exclusively on the Marcellus, but he said his findings may have broader relevance. Many regions where oil and gas is being drilled have more permeable underground environments than the one he analyzed, he said.

meyers did fabulous peer reviewed study on cbm impacts in 2009:

Overview: Groundwater management and coal bed methane development in the Powder River Basin of Montana by Tom Meyers, *Journal of Hydrology* 368:178-193, March 2009 Issue.

Coal bed methane (CBM) development will eventually pump more than 124 000 ha-m of groundwater, or more than 40% of the recharge, from the coal seam and sandstone aquifers of the Montana portion of the Powder River Basin (PRB). This will relieve the hydrostatic pressure, by causing a drawdown in the potentiometric surface and drawing groundwater from storage and natural discharges, to release the methane gas. **A numerical groundwater flow model simulated drawdown that will exceed 90 m [~290 feet] in the middle of the CBM fields with 6-m [~ 19 feet] drawdown extending up to 29 km [~ 46 miles] from the fields.**

Simulation results indicate that river flux [flow] will decrease up to 40% and drawdown will encompass hundreds of wells and springs. Recovery requires up to 45 years for significant decreases in river flux to recover and is not complete for 200 years.

Restrict shale gas fracking to 600m from water supplies, says study, Researchers recommend 'absolute minimum' safe zone of 600m between fracking and aquifers by

Press Association, April 25, 2012, *The Guardian*

Controversial "fracking" for shale gas should only take place at least 600 metres down from aquifers used for water supplies, scientists said on Wednesday. A new study revealed the process...caused fractures running upwards and downwards through the ground of up to 588 metres from their source.

Newspapers' effort to open shale lawsuit supported by others by Don Hopey, May 1, 2012, *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*

"The sealed court records in this case are part of a widespread pattern of industry secrecy," Mr. Gerhart said. "In the face of a nationwide gas drilling boom and the troubling reports of related health impacts, we cannot afford to let this pattern continue." **The 39-page brief contains references to 27 other court cases** in seven states involving confidential settlements or limited disclosure or nondisclosure of court proceedings alleging health or environmental problems caused by unconventional shale gas development involving hydraulic fracturing, or "fracking."

above summaries posted at <http://www.ernstversusencana.ca/>

(case news list is up and running, cbm & frac news list undergoing renos, so new posts will not show for a few weeks)

**Research on shale gas exploration & extraction and the use of the fracking
technique:
14th March 2012**

The EPA recognises the need for detailed scientific information and is currently funding preliminary background research on this emerging issue. The research is investigating the environmental considerations and impacts of shale gas exploration and extraction, in particular with regard to the use of hydraulic fracturing ("fracking") technology, and investigating the regulatory approaches of other countries. This preliminary background research was commenced by the Environmental Protection Agency in consultation with other regulatory authorities, including the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources and the Commissioner for Energy Regulation.

The current study, which is being conducted by the University of Aberdeen, will provide information on:

- The potential environmental impacts of fracking, in particular, and shale gas extraction in general
- The potential for methane and chemical migration into groundwater as a result of fracking
- The role of local geology in successful fracking and shale gas extraction
- The regulatory approaches taken in other countries where the fracking technique

has been used

- Best Environmental Practice for shale gas exploration and extraction using the fracking technique
- Fracking without the use of chemicals and the reality of such a proposal.

The desktop study, currently underway, is due to be completed and will be released shortly. The budget for this study is limited to €6,000. Further to the results of this study, and building on information gathered from a range of other sources in the meantime, the EPA plans to commission a further detailed, extensive and comprehensive study of the topic in 2012, in conjunction with the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources.

The EPA will work closely with other public bodies in developing a specification for any such further study on the topic. The EPA will liaise with the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government and with the Commissioner for Energy Regulation. The EPA will also consult with regulatory bodies in Northern Ireland and in the UK in order to develop the best possible specification for any such additional research project.

Outline of briefing for Aberdeen University

Shale Gas research brief.

Investigation into the environmental considerations and impacts of shale gas exploration and extraction, in particular with regard to the use of hydraulic fracturing ("fracking") technology and investigation into the regulatory approaches of other countries, with a view to helping to establish Best Environmental Practice.

The extraction of shale gas on a commercial scale is an activity that is licensable by the EPA. While such activity is not likely to occur in the near future, it is likely that permits for exploration in the Lough Allen basin may be sought from the Department of Communications, Energy & Natural Resources (DoCENR) in the next 2 years, and such permits may seek to perform this activity (extraction) on a smaller scale as part of the exploration. Such permits may seek approval to use hydraulic fracturing techniques. This method of gas extraction has never previously been used in Ireland.

It is envisaged that the EPA will be a statutory consultee with respect to any Environmental Impact Assessment required for shale gas projects at the exploration stage, and will therefore be required to gain expert knowledge on the environmental impacts in order to fulfil this role. Such knowledge would also be required to assess any licence applications for commercial gas extraction in the future.

The activity in question is covered by Class 9.1 of the EPA Acts 1992 to 2011, "The extraction, other than offshore extraction, of petroleum, natural gas, coal or bituminous shale". This class is not covered under the IPPC Directive 2008/1/EC, and so no BAT or BAT Reference documents exist for the activity. Shale gas exploration and extraction is proposed or has taken place in a number of countries worldwide, with a wide range of positions adopted toward regulation of the activity, ranging from France, where it is banned, to the USA and Canada, where extraction is permitted on a commercial scale. Other countries have adopted intermediate positions such as moratoria on fracking in exploration.

This research project has the following objectives:

- To provide information on the potential environmental impacts of fracking, in particular, and shale gas extraction in general, e.g. methane and chemical migration into groundwater.
- The role of geology in successful fracking and shale gas extraction.
- To provide information on the regulatory approaches of other countries.
- To provide information which will help to establish Best Environmental Practice. The possibility of fracking without the use of chemicals should be investigated in this context.

In conducting the research, it is important to use independent sources, or verify information where possible.

The report prepared should contain, at least, the following elements;

- ⇒ Introduction & context
- ⇒ Potential environmental impacts.
- ⇒ Geological principles of relevance in fracking and shale gas extraction.
- ⇒ Regulatory approaches in other countries.
- ⇒ Establishing Best Environmental Practice

Shocking Conflict of Interest: Private Water Companies Partner With Fracking Lobby

http://www.alternet.org/story/155065/shocking_conflict_of_interest_%3A_private_water_companies_partner_with_fracking_lobby?page=entire

American Independent News Network / By Sarah Pavlus

Shocking Conflict of Interest: Private Water Companies Partner With Fracking Lobby

Selling water to drillers, two of the nation's biggest private water utilities may soon profit from treating the wastewater.

April 19, 2012 |

Two of the country's largest private water utility companies are participants in a massive lobbying effort to expand controversial shale gas drilling -- a heavy industrial activity that promises to enrich the water companies but may also put drinking water resources at risk.

The situation -- which some watchdogs describe as a troubling conflict of interest -- underscores the complex issues raised by the nationwide push to privatize infrastructure and services like water, prisons, and roads.

The water companies -- <<http://www.amwater.com/>>American Water and <<https://www.aquaamerica.com/Pages/Home.aspx>>Aqua America -- are leading drinking water suppliers in Pennsylvania, where drilling is booming. They also sell water to gas companies -- which use a drilling technique that requires massive amounts of water -- and have expressed interest in treating drilling wastewater, a potentially <<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424053111903918104576502562678793674.html>>lucrative opportunity.

These investor-owned, publicly traded water utility companies are also dues-paying "associate members" of the gas industry's powerful <http://marcelluscoalition.org/> Marcellus Shale Coalition, a fact confirmed by coalition spokesman Travis Windle, who says associate members pay \$15,000 annually in dues. "Our associate members are really the backbone of the industry," adds Windle.

Both water companies serve millions of people across the country -- Aqua America operates in <https://www.aquaamerica.com/Pages/History.aspx> 11 states and American Water in <http://www.amwater.com/about-us/our-states.html> more than 30.

The coalition, which is led by major gas producers, <http://marcelluscoalition.org/about/> contends that "responsible development of natural gas" will bolster the region's economy while providing an important source of domestic energy. It has reported over \$2 million in Pennsylvania lobbying expenditures since 2010.

Aqua America joined the coalition in 2010 and Pennsylvania American Water -- a subsidiary of American Water -- joined in 2011, according to the coalition's quarterly magazine, which publishes a full member list in each issue.

Shale gas drillers use a combination of horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracturing, or "fracking," to extract gas from the Marcellus formation in Pennsylvania. The controversial technique forces millions of gallons of water -- mixed with sand and chemicals -- into the ground to crack the shale rock and release gas. In addition to the potential risks posed by actual fracturing, the process produces large amounts of toxic wastewater that can be difficult to dispose of safely.

The Environmental Protection Agency is currently conducting a congressionally-mandated <http://yosemite.epa.gov/opa/admpress.nsf/e77fdd4f5afd88a3852576b3005a604f/ba591ee790c58d30852576ea004ee3ad%21opendocument> study "to investigate the potential adverse impact that hydraulic fracturing may have on water quality and public health." Pennsylvania is home to three of the seven sites <http://yosemite.epa.gov/opa/admpress.nsf/d0cf6618525a9efb85257359003fb69d/57d665864627766f852578b8005c8813%21OpenDocument> selected for the nationwide study.

Separately, the EPA is testing the water of <http://stateimpact.npr.org/pennsylvania/tag/dimock/> some Pennsylvania residents who say that nearby gas drilling contaminated their wells. According to the EPA, early test results indicate the water is safe to drink, however, some environmentalists <http://stateimpact.npr.org/pennsylvania/2012/04/09/environmental-group-says-epas-dimock-results-shows-fracking-polluted-water/> disagree with that analysis.

In the meantime, the water companies are selling water to the drillers while calling for fracking to be done in an environmentally responsible manner. In a presentation to investors last month, American Water stated that it is "realizing additional revenues from water sales to drilling companies while remaining vigilant in protecting our water sources." In the presentation, the company noted it is "currently selling water to gas drillers at 34 distribution points in Pennsylvania," and that it "sold 250.4 million gallons of water to gas drillers from January through December of 2011, producing \$1.6 million in revenues."

(Some public water utilities sell to drillers too, but no public utilities are part of the Marcellus Shale Coalition.)

American Water spokesman Terry Maenza says the company's <http://www.amwater.com/paaw/ensuring-water-quality/marcellus-shale-/page14485.html> support

for environmental protection is unchanged by its role in the shale coalition and that it is also a member of numerous environmental groups.

"By the nature of our business, we will continue to be stewards of the environment, ensuring water source protection," says Maenza.

The company isn't currently in the drilling wastewater treatment business, according to Maenza, though during a quarterly earnings call last year, American Water CEO Jeff Sterba told investors, "We are very definitely looking and working in the wastewater treatment area." Maenza declined to comment on any specific initiatives. Aqua America executive Karl Kyriss says his company's involvement in the coalition helps protect water resources.

"By participating, we can have some direct input into the group that is looking to support development of the Marcellus Shale," says Kyriss. "But we are very much committed that it be done in an environmentally sensitive and protected manner. And we think we can do that better from the inside than just sort of watching what happens."

Aqua America is aggressively positioning itself to take advantage of what CEO Nick DeBenedictis has

<https://www.aquaamerica.com/News/Pages/AquaAmericaReportsRecordEarningsforSecondQuarter.aspx>>described to investors as a "water-energy nexus that could have a positive impact on the future of our company." In recent years, the company has made sizeable acquisitions in Texas and Ohio -- states that, like Pennsylvania, are home to large shale gas plays -- and is also building a pipeline in Pennsylvania to supply water to drillers.

DeBenedictis believes the pipeline will ease the wear and tear on roads and the environment currently caused by trucks carrying water to wells. Recently, however, that pipeline has http://articles.philly.com/2012-04-18/business/31361933_1_fracking-trailer-park-anti-drilling>come under fire from local anti-drilling activists because the project will displace dozens of residents from a mobile home park.

Like American Water, Aqua America is not currently in the drilling wastewater treatment business, but may expand into that market in the future.

Some environmental advocates see potential conflicts between the interests of the private water industry and the interests of drinking water consumers.

"If American Water and Aqua America wanted to ensure that their water supplies were protected, they would support a national ban on hydraulic fracturing for shale gas," argues Mary Grant, a researcher at Food and Water Watch, which has reported on Aqua America's ties to the coalition. "But, instead of acting on the precautionary principle, they are paying thousands of dollars a year to an industry coalition that advocates for shale gas development, despite the risks to water quality."

"We are concerned that these relationships encourage investor owned water utilities to endorse shale gas development despite its risk to public water supplies," Grant says. Eric Goldstein, a senior attorney for the Natural Resources Defense Council, adds, "Sometimes the interests of private ownership are inconsistent with the concept of preserving our water resources in the public trust for future generations. And the potential clashing of those interests is why these questions have been raised about whether for-profit companies ought to be running public water supplies."

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