

FRIDAY, JANUARY 3, 2014

The Yukon government is fracking Yukoners again

Open Letter to Premier Darrell Pasloski, Scott Kent minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and Patti McLeod, chair of Select Committee Regarding the Risks and Benefits of Hydraulic Fracturing.

On Nov. 10 a draft of the Legislative Select Committee Regarding the Risks and Benefits of Hydraulic Fracturing tour of Alberta frack sites was released, but not to the public.

A final draft was belatedly released publicly on Jan. 2 only a week before the trip. I would like to point out that it appears the committee will be primarily shepherded by oil and gas representatives, supporters and/or regulators to tour locations and meetings chosen mainly the pro-industry and government sectors. We all know, or can imagine, these sectors have a strong bias towards hydraulic fracturing. Adding one anti-fracking group to the trip is a wonderful move, but it is not enough. Meetings with those that have been negatively affected by, and/or those critical of oil and gas development are still largely being avoided.

Yukoners Concerned takes exception to this biased approach in that the guidelines for the committee are to study both the risks and benefits of hydraulic fracturing, not just the so-called positives spun by industry and a fossil-fuel obsessed Alberta government.

Once again we believe that the Yukon Party government does not want Yukoners to know about this; the lack of any public transparency has ensured, thus far, there is no public discussion or input.

We feel that leaving the release of the committee's schedule to this late in the game is unacceptable. Yukoners should see that this committee is subjecting itself to a biased agenda, deficient in public environmental and health considerations.

On another important concern, I spoke to Patti McLeod a few weeks ago about the legislative hearings that are to take place on Jan. 30 and 31. According to her, they are going to be very restrictive in that the public will not be given the opportunity to present or ask questions directly to the committee. Although she assured me there will be other public meetings in the communities that may be structured so that questions and comments could be presented.

We have not yet seen any posted dates or a list of communities that are going to be visited. It is our opinion that this lack of transparency and limited

opportunity for participation by Yukoners is another ploy, just like loading the fracking committee tour with industry-biased tour sites and meetings. They do not want to hear any negative public reactions.

Would you kindly let Yukoners know if you will be following up these concerns.

Don Roberts, chair
Yukoners Concerned

YUKON NEWS

Fracking is not an answer

Lately, I'm working under system overload but we at Yukoners Concerned try to stay on top of the subject and we do all this on our own dime and time. In the last 20 months, I spent probably half of my days researching the subject of fracking and all its environmental social, economic and health effects.

A lot of these effects are nothing new. As a matter of fact, I knew since my apprenticeship days, in the late '50s and early '60s, as a steamfitter-pipe fitter that natural gas is not cleaner than coal. In the last decade or so, with the tremendous development of new drilling technologies, especially fracking, the side effects of the extraction of fossil fuels on the environment have increased many fold. But so has the development of renewable energy technology. We in the Yukon already have one of the best track records in electrical energy production (close to 99 per cent hydro) so why don't use more of these new clean alternatives?

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