



Media Release

NWT Citizens Call for Environmental Assessment of Conoco Phillips' Application to Frack 10 Wells in the Sahtu Region

Tulita June 9, 2014

A growing number of NWT citizens are expressing concerns about horizontal hydraulic fracturing (fracking) and the short- and long-term negative impacts this could have on land, water, wildlife, climate and communities. Citizens from across the NWT are calling for the latest Conoco Phillips' application to drill and frack 10 wells in the Sahtu region to be referred to a full environmental assessment.

According to the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act (MVRMA), which outlines the process for environmental impact assessment in the NWT, a project that might be a cause for public concern should be referred to an environmental assessment.

Many Sahtu residents are expressing concerns about the lack of previous consultation on fracking, and insist that there must be a focus on thorough public consultation and discussion with this latest application. "Horizontal fracking has the potential to affect everyone across the NWT. It is a new technique in the Sahtu and we do not have enough information about it. We know it is banned in many places around the world because of concerns similar to ours" comments Doug Yallee from Tulita.

Widespread public concern about this new and controversial oil extraction technique has been demonstrated through the presentation of two petitions to the Legislative Assembly in March 2014, one of which was signed by 790 people from across the NWT, including all Sahtu communities:

http://epetition.lant.public-i.tv/epetition_core/community/petition/2614

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BLF1fv7RFys>

"Fracking uses and permanently contaminates very large volumes of water, and will require transporting toxic fracking chemicals and polluted wastewater through our communities, along our highways and on the Mackenzie River," says Christine Wenman of Ecology North. "In Canada alone, the controversial technique of horizontal hydraulic fracturing has been placed under moratorium in the Yukon, Québec, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, in order to

allow time to study the environmental and social impacts of the process before approval is given to use it. We want to ensure that this new oil extraction process has been carefully studied before further fracking is approved in the NWT," comments Lois Little of the NWT Chapter of the Council of Canadians.

Recently, the Canadian Medical Association Journal published an article summarizing the growing evidence of the negative impacts fracking has on human health, including exposure to cancer-causing chemicals and increased rates of congenital heart defects in newborn babies: <http://www.cmaj.ca/content/early/2014/04/22/cmaj.109-4725>

In May, an expert panel of interdisciplinary scientists published a report for the Council of Canadian Academies highlighting significant gaps in knowledge about the potential for groundwater contamination from horizontal hydraulic fracturing. Their comprehensive report calls for caution and thorough research:

<http://www.scienceadvice.ca/en/assessments/completed/shale-gas.aspx>

More information on the concerns about fracking can be found at the following websites: frackingactionnorth.ca, <http://www.alternativesnorth.ca>, <http://www.ecologynorth.ca> and www.cocnwt.ca

For more information and to speak with members of the Fracking Action North coalition, please contact the following spokespeople:

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