

City of Corner Brook Submission

Fracking Review Panel



CITY OF CORNER BROOK

JUNE 1, 2015

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Introduction:

On behalf of the Council of the City of Corner Brook we would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide input to the Hydraulic Fracking Review Panel. As a Council we have a responsibility to ensure our citizens' voice is heard when addressing major issues affecting our community. On this particular topic we have not received clear consensus from residents on the hydraulic fracking debate.

As an elected body, we acknowledge that we do not have the expertise within our organization to make a definitive assessment on whether hydraulic fracking should be permitted within the province and in proximity to our community. In the public domain there are a lot of opponents and supporters of hydraulic fracking. As a Council we are listening to the arguments from all sides. We are striving to reach a balance to learn more about the issues, keeping abreast of future opportunities, evolving research, and the risks associated with fracking. There are a lot of conflicting arguments and debates, and in our opinion the Review Panel must assess all the facts and the final decision must be based on facts and science and not on perception.

Economic

As a Council we are always seeking opportunities to diversify our economy

From an economic development perspective the oil and gas industry provides great potential to boost the economy of our City and region. This in turn will create social and economic benefits and improve the overall quality of life of residents. However in pursuing opportunities for oil and gas development much public concern has also been raised on environmental issues associated with hydraulic fracking.

As a Council we are being lobbied by both sides of the debate. Those in support of permitting fracking have confidence in the regulatory regimes to minimize the impacts of fracking. They believe a case can be made in support of hydraulic fracking if a solid framework is established to address the social and environment concerns around fracking.

We agree with the implementation of world class regulations and a strict regulatory enforcement regime, along with a mechanism to include an independent, community driven monitoring program that would allow for hydraulic fracking.

From an economic development perspective we strongly support the responsible development of the oil and gas industry in our region. If Government decides to proceed with hydraulic fracking we would suggest the following mechanism be established:

- Conduct baseline testing of key environmental indicators before, during and after hydraulic fracturing activities, so that there is at least some clarity on whether changes have taken place. Such testing would in turn help identify whether current regulatory practices do in fact adequately mitigate environmental risks.
- Develop exploratory regional regulations based on science
- Establish an Exploratory Regulatory Commission with a responsibility to ensure monitoring and compliance of the regulations
- Develop a Regional Economic Development Fund with a percentage of the royalties from oil and gas development being returned to the region.
- Ensure adequate bond and insurance protections are in place in the event of environmental damage

Environmental and Socio-Economic

There are a lot of legitimate environmental concerns over fracking and we appreciate the voice of this sector in helping to protect our environment. For far too long industry was allowed to operate with very minimal oversight, regulations and any consideration of protecting our environment. Communities and individuals world-wide have been the victims of industry negligence so there is certainly an understanding of the public mistrust to proceed with caution. Nobody wants to see their community negatively impacted by development and over time governments have been cognizant of the need to enforce strict, robust regulations to ensure economic development can proceed. Industry has to be strictly regulated and they have to be accountable for their activities.

Some of the concerns raised by the environmental groups opposed to fracking identify the challenges of increased trucks utilizing roads and highways. This is an activity which accompanies many types of industrial development activity and a common issue which governments face on a routine basis. By imposing restriction on road access, weight of the

truck, hours of operations, we have no doubt that this issue can be easily resolved and should not factor into the decision making on hydraulic fracking.

It is important when dealing with environmental or social-economic arguments that you are dealing with valid concerns, assessing the risks and benefits, and basing the final decision on fact and science.

CONCLUSION

Development of the oil and gas industry is without a doubt the single greatest economic development opportunity for our region. We ask that the Review Panel give fair and equitable consideration to the environmental, social and economic factors in making a decision on hydraulic fracking.

This presentation is respectfully submitted on behalf of the City of Corner Brook. If you have any questions on any of the above information please feel free to contact Mayor Charles Pender, 637-1537 or cpender@cornerbrook.com