

October 1st 2013

Hon. David Alward
Premier of New-Brunswick
Centennial Building
P. O. Box 6000
Fredericton, NB
E3B 5H1

Dear Mr. Alward,

The Really Local Harvest Cooperative is writing this letter to request the government of New Brunswick place a moratorium on hydrofracking (fracking) for shale gas in our province.

Really Local Harvest Cooperative represents 29 progressive, forward thinking and prosperous farms in South-eastern New Brunswick. Our members believe in working collectively towards common goals and in enhancing the sustainability of the agriculture sector and the food production capacity of our region as a whole. We feel that our region is poised for success due to our people, our environment, our weather and our close proximity to significant markets. Despite government's determination to build urban economies, agriculture and aquaculture continue to represent a major portion of our economy and billions of dollars of products annually. We feel that without appropriate safeguards in place, hydrofracking not only risks our environment and our health, it also risks our provincial economy.

We recognized that the benefits of hydrofracking may outweigh the risks in certain instances and that we have a huge thirst for cheap energy. We also recognize that hydrofracking may provide short-term economic benefits for our province. That said we feel that the current state of hydrofracking exploration does not meet our values, protect our environment or safeguard our livelihoods. We feel that the gas industry as it stands puts our province in danger. While most of our members are not scientists, we would like the following assurances from government and industry before lifting a moratorium on shale gas exploration:

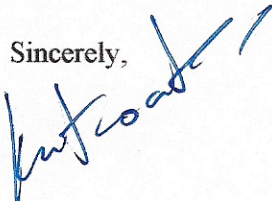
1. **Chemicals:** New Brunswick's College of Physicians and Surgeons have called for a moratorium on shale gas drilling due to the lack of disclosure by gas companies on the exact chemicals in their fracking mix (632 different chemicals). We support the College of Physicians and Surgeons in their mandate to create a public health policy that is safe and their resulting request for a moratorium;

2. Third Party Validation: We request that the geological features of our gas deposits be verified by an independent organization that is mandated to review which horizons are to be “fracked”, what depths chemicals and water will be injected and what lies between the injections and our ground water. Ultimately, third party validation should mitigate risk of ground water contamination by having a veto capability on wells that place our ground water at particular risk;
3. Well Regulation: We request that well casings be regulated to minimize the risk of leakage. This would include regulating the entire life cycle of a well including development, use and decommissioning. Half of the shale gas wells drilled in Quebec failed, prompting that province to impose a moratorium on the industry;
4. Fresh Water: Fracking uses significant quantities of water. Each gas well will require approximately 20 million litres of water plus large volumes of sand and 200,000 litres of acids, biocides and other compounds. With the current area under exploration in NB, there is the potential to dig tens of thousands of wells. When you add to this the risk of contamination from substances currently buried deep beneath the surface, we feel that specific and strict regulation of water pollution is essential before fracking is permitted. We would like to see regulations that conserve our fresh water, mandate recycling of “fracked” water and prevent overuse of water according to ecosystem and aquifer thresholds. Even if the wells don't fail there is still the issue of what to do with millions of litres of dangerous contaminated water;
5. Profit: Gas companies are for profit and their ultimate responsibility is to assure their shareholders an income. We feel that while there are short-term economic benefits to shale gas development in New Brunswick, most of the real profit and benefits will not be retained, but returned to large corporations around the world. We need regulations with teeth to retain the income within our province. We need to retain income that is proportional to the long-term risk we are incurring. An independent study done by Headwaters Economics in 23 counties in the western USA determined that “counties that were **not** focused on fossil fuel extraction experienced higher growth rates, more diverse economies, better-educated populations, a smaller gap between high and low income households, and more retirement and investment income.”
6. Trust Fund or Bond: Based on studies done at drilling sites in Texas, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Montana, Quebec and more there are significant environmental risks associated with shale gas drilling. The drilling companies have a reputation for ignoring rules and creating environmental damage. We strongly suggest that gas companies be mandated to develop a trust fund or bond that would be used to repair environmental damage, compensate landowners for loss of value and offset any community losses resulting from fracking. Ultimately, if no environmental damage is incurred,

land values are not affected and communities benefit from the gas industry, after a period post decommissioning of a well the gas company would get this money back. We believe that this would provide them an incentive to invest in long-term environmental safeguards.

In summary, we feel that there are too many risks to pursue shale gas exploration at this time. We feel that without more explicit safeguards the shale gas industry puts the long-term economic viability of our industry and our province in peril. We feel that this industry will almost certainly have a negative impact on our farms and our livelihoods. Therefore, we are calling for a moratorium on shale gas drilling in NB until better and safer systems are developed and shale gas companies are held accountable for their impacts. Fossil fuels are important to our lives and our farms but water and health are critical.

Sincerely,


Mr. Kent Coates
President
Really Local Harvest Cooperative

Sources

Jannette M. Barth, Ph.D. and JM Barth & Associates, Inc. North American Shale Gas Plays: More Unanswered Questions, Prepared in Response to Comments by Concerned Citizens of New Brunswick, Canada. January 17 2011

Craig Michaels, Watershed Program Director James L. Simpson, Senior Attorney, William Wegner, Staff Scientist "Fractured Communities, Case Studies of the Environmental Impacts of Industrial Gas Drilling". September 2010

Michelle Bamberger and Robert E. Oswald. Impacts of Gas Drilling on Human and Animal Health. New Solutions Vol 22(1) 51-77. 2012

Cc: *Hon. Paul Robichaud, Deputy Premier*
Hon. Mike Olscam, Minister of Agriculture Aquaculture and Fisheries
Hon. Craig Leonard, Minister of Energy and Mines
Hon. Danny Soucy, Minister of Environment and Local Government
Hon. Claude Williams, Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure
Hon. Hugh Fleming, Minister of Health and Attorney General
N.B. Office of the Ombudsman