

Frack Canada report a preview of the frack Yukon report?

By PETER BECKER

To those regions that are already fracked in frightening finality, or in the process, the report is more late than helpful. It also poses the question if the "Go Slow" report means to help others, like Yukon, or frack recruit us?

This I will try to address. Bear with me, as I am squeezing explosive brevity from what, I am told, weighs five or six pounds when printed.

Environmental Impacts of Shale Gas Extraction in Canada, commissioned by the feds, was recently released by the venerable Council of Canadian Academies (CCA).

The word preview might be overselling the relevance for Yukon a little bit, or it might prove better than that. Look no further for a clue of what is coming in the fall report by the Yukon legislature's frack committee chair, Patti McLeod.

The CCA report follows her playbook to date, of inserting doubt into the facts, presented or left out ones; or forgetting them in the summaries and media releases.

Most negatives of fracking most of the time, including the worst of irremediable water contamination and widely already occurred and documented health impacts in Alberta and B.C., are diminished as "risk" or "risks".

This particular application of misleading uncertainty is used 258

stipulate.

More can always be learned, but a key thesis of the report that not enough is known is disrespectful even of its own body of science and resources.

Voluntary reading:

The Nevada hydrologist Tom Myers and his work in the Marcellus is referenced. However, cited criticism on his study "Potential Contaminant Pathways from Hydraulic Fracturing to Aquifers" (*Groundwater Journal*) raises questions. Data gaps are explained as a fundamental flaw in Myers' study, when in reality they may become the starting point of follow up work.

References in Myers' study to reports of high concentrations of thermogenic methane in Pennsylvania and Marcellus water bodies, fingerprinted to deep Earth origins, are ignored.

The report states that an accepted model of pathways has not yet been developed, not recognizing that Myers delivered a start. A perhaps unusual disconnect, even when considering natural academic rivalries, as there is no constructive forward looking.

Presented critics, Saiers & Barth, are quoted. They appear to have assumed outdated frack pressure levels orders of magnitudes below what is used in the up to date brute force and rock-breaking levels that are applied modelling the interconnections of pre-existing fault line

Environmental Defense Fund, Groundwater Protection Council and Synergy Alberta run their message sausage machines overtime. Which they do right here in our Yukon home.

Luckily, a well-known frack contamination water study, by EDF in collaboration with the University of Texas Energy Institute, was disowned by U T because of undisclosed conflicts of interest. It summarized evidence, similar to the CCA report, by annulling facts with misdirected doubt.

COMMENT

Structural unemployment, devalued real estate, growing mountains of public debt, health impact cost, waste of energy resources and subsidies, production failure, landscape and life support system degradation, investment fraud and infrastructure ruin among the elements of a hardened economic decline already have become the endgame of super short-lived shale frack developments in places like Texas.

And it is documented by the Texas Government Railroad Commission and industry records.

This is left out, as if not a problem to supposed economic benefits that are consistently mentioned and implied at face value.

Economic claims are listed without examination, as it is an environmental report, right?

The sting of intellect, creativity and sound analysis have always been key of David against Goliath survival.

This is worth repeating; the uncertainty of the word risk does not truthfully represent the proven and guaranteed harms. Benefits are not a fact not even to be looked at.

Only the supposed environmental risks are examined, the supposed economic benefits are not questioned in the academy report or by the Yukon frack committee to date.

This bias towards wholesale acceptance of claims for supposed benefits shows it is not the natural skepticism of science that is at work.

But political decisions tend to be made based on economic claims for benefits, not risks.

In fact, the language of "risk", for example, viewed in the glamorous light of entrepreneurial risk, even has the amazing power to convert liabilities into perception assets. In this way, further fraudulent weight is added on the benefit side of the scale.

Shale bubble con-game with enough surround sound to hype it up, to penetrate frackademia, investors, media, politicians and concerned citizens alike. So they can then shoot themselves in the foot, picking up the seductive, self-defeating language all too easily, all too naively.

Report authors include serious scientists like Harvard Prof. Naomi

to fail within a generation, approaching a 100-per-cent failure of abandoned wells over time. Because of pressure cycle stress, unconventional wells fail even sooner, while perforating aquifers tens of thousands of times. Mayer knew none of it.

The all-important position of the report panel chair was filled with John Cherry. He has a history of hydrological and geological work and as past research chair of the National Sciences and Engineering Research Council, that had and has a substantial investment in tar sands extraction and unconventional oil and gas drilling operations.

Most difficult in the report are it's damned if you do and damned if you don't options for reading it.

Recognizing science substance in it could be misconstrued by Patti MacLeod as overall endorsement of the go slow – improve regulations – fracking go ahead stance.

In the more accessible report parts quotable leads are allowing a *de facto* meaningless frack delay of grace. It can only mean more consent manufacturing, generally called social licence in unconventional oil and gas operations.

On the other hand, critique on the pro-frack summary of the report, could bury deeper awareness of frack-prohibitive science in the report already limited to lots of incoherent fine print.

The Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers picked its cor-

times in the 292-page report and helps colouring disasters as fixable by improved regulations. Completely out of balance the words "harm", "harms"; or "harmful" appear only five times in total.

Evidence and name of "contamination" is in the report, only to be methodically mischaracterized and beautified as "risk".

This is a problem as frack harms, not risks, which also exist, dominate the experience in fracked regions across variations of irrelevant regulatory regimes.

The report hides away what is the by moratoria and bans in Canada and elsewhere recognized quintessence of what is known: by stating and falsely concluding not enough is known. This further builds out a system of phoney uncertainty language.

Economic and ecological harm are two sides of the same waste and destruction which is consistent with unconventional oil and gas geology, not at all determined by improved frack regulation.

The current standard of high-intensity multi-well pad fracking is increasing its Earth-shattering force all the time, with or even without use of process water.

With that, the actual frack industry trend causes increasing economic harm, more pathway chaos for methane to be pushed and travel into toxic solution in water bodies; increasing inherent destruction, not an improving or to be improved situation as perspectives of the report

and natural fracture webs in Myer's work. A potentially serious but not disclosed flaw for their discussion of Myers' pathway and fracture interconnection details.

Myers' work can be overlaid with well respected shale fracture pathway research of Duke University that shows toxic methane levels in water caused by fracking, which the report also failed to do.

In further disregard of Myers' study, the report overlooks the, — also Yukon typical — absence of conventional reservoirs, cap, trap and seal characteristics, as proof for natural fracture pathway webs from deep shale all the way to the surface, that transport methane in a geological time frame.

These have the recognized potential and probability to become aggravated by fracking to release methane to the surface in a human time frame. The report overlooked the fundamental arithmetic. The fact is methane travels from A to B. We can discuss how it moves but not deny it does so.

(End of voluntary reading.)

The friendly sounding "go slow" phrase and content in the report in reality activates two problems.

First, deluding the public that contrary to the frack track record, small-scale and slow fracking is supposedly possible and brings advantages.

Secondly, buying time so the public opinion can be massaged some more. By making the big oil-funded shale lobby groups like the

A bias on top of incomplete but valuable evidence is introduced by such phoney language. This problem of false, self-referential economics, by some called frackonomics, also has a Yukon name: the Yukon government-initiated "Select Committee Regarding the Risks and Benefits of Hydraulic Fracturing". It meant to frame and manipulate the process outcome before it had even started. It works, as often the pro-frack bias in this title is not questioned by those who have been gulled.

Attention to linguistics and semantics in mass communication only looks like flamboyant hair-splitting. They are the front line every time there is a fight on that is for keeps.

H.G. Wells (*War of the Worlds*) and William Stephenson (*A Man Called Intrepid*) talked about it and agreed on that already in 1920, at the dawn of the radio age.

The extreme part of the oil industry knows it too and spends billions on psychological warfare. It is a drawn-out playing of and on both sides.

It uses the green-appearing chameleon tactic of advocating for improved frack regulations to supposedly help the environment, when in practicality it is a promotion for fracking that breaks the back of the land.

At great loss in northern B.C. people failed to grasp it. Mistakes have been made, but Yukoners still have the opportunity to do better.

Oreskes and Dr. Maurice Dusseaul but also the expert communicator and fossil fuel consultant University of Alberta Prof. Rick Chalaturmyk. Yukoners marvelled at his slickly delivered advice given in Whitehorse for improved frack regulations.

Chalaturmyk advises the troubled Shell Quest Carbon Capture Storage project professionally and promotes it publicly. In fact, he is Shell's Quest CCS poster child. All the while Chalaturmyk endorsed Quest as a panel member of the DNV consulting firm, that supposedly acted independently reviewing Quest.

The DNV job Chalaturmyk did not list in his background or disclose it in other ways to the Yukon frack committee or regarding the report at hand. Academic protocol and public trust require to be on the transparent side of current or past conflict of interest exposures or potentials. Lets hope Patti McLeod will do it for him, comes fall and Yukon frack report time.

Yukoners remember Prof. Bernhard Mayer from the University of Calgary who presented to the select committee in Whitehorse a mastery in vagueness and double speak, the perfect merchant of doubt. He had stated, oh so helpfully, that industry claims on well bore integrity are not credible.

When he was actually hiding facts that are not uncertain and data compiled by the Society of Petroleum Engineers showing a third of oil and gas wells are guaranteed

ner and rejected the report almost faster than it could have read it.

But despite CAPP's well-known falsehood that frack contamination of water never occurred, its mantra of "managing risk with regulation" is so well-aligned with the gist of the report that its media release comes across as a rather well performed good cop bad cop routine.

With the necessary utilitarian review of what is in the report, let us not forget what is really important. It is to wake up to the hard truth of diminishing returns. It is to stop the morbid decay of livelihood and democratic institutions in petro-state extreme, inflated by unconventional gas speculators and underhanded LNG promoters.

The northern B.C.-introduced and now universal standard of continuously intensifying brute force fracking on multi-well pads needs no regulation of accidents, as it is the matter of course accident in itself.

In its advice, the Academy of Sciences report is particularly insensitive to this problem of regulating the shattering of entire regions underground to pieces, which, like land mines, atom bombs and DDT, cannot be regulated and therefore equally must be illegal.

Not properly understanding the CCA report's evidence as well as bias, means inviting the corrupting of good people wherever the frack regulations are tried, because they do not accomplish the absurd.

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