

New Brunswick Anti-Shale Gas Alliance
Update # 8 – 2016

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2016 has been a year of progress and disappointment. Obviously, the government's extending the moratorium on fracking indefinitely was a high point. The recent decision to amend the Clean Environment Act to ban fracking wastewater from municipal sewage treatment plants was also extremely important, because it was put into legislation.

Our disappointment is that all other government actions on shale gas to date have been executive decisions, which are subject to being overturned by a future government.

We continue to lobby to get more provisions of the moratorium conditions put into legislation. That is also why NBASGA's lawsuit remains alive, although we have not pushed it in light of the indefinite moratorium.

In a related lawsuit that would greatly affect shale gas in New Brunswick, Elsipogtog First Nation has filed a lawsuit based on their rights to manage the use of land, water and other resources in their territory under the Peace and Friendship Treaties. This, and similar actions across Canada, bear close watching.

In other specific areas:

Climate

In particular, we would like to see a 'climate change assessment' added to the 5 conditions for lifting the moratorium. It is a glaring absence, especially as it contradicts the government's admirable work so far to address climate change, as seen in the report from the Select Committee on Climate Change.

The upcoming climate legislation to implement the plan would be a perfect place to correct this oversight and move at least some of the 5 conditions into legislation.

New studies have shown that methane emissions from the oil and gas industry are as much as 60% higher than had been previously estimated. This, together with studies that conclude that no new fossil fuel projects can be started if we are to keep temperatures below the 2 degree Celsius target agreed to in Paris, should be the last nail in the shale gas coffin in New Brunswick.

SKY'S LIMIT: WHY THE PARIS CLIMATE GOALS REQUIRE A MANAGED DECLINE OF FOSSIL FUEL PRODUCTION

<http://priceofoil.org/2016/09/22/the-skys-limit-report/>

The federal government's climate plans have also been a mixed message. While putting a price on carbon and phasing out coal are both positive actions, the approval of 2 major bitumen pipelines and a LNG plant makes one wonder if anyone in government actually understands the science that says we have very little time left to act. 2016 found evidence in almost every field of study that the climate is changing much more rapidly than expected, continually breaking records.

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With temperatures in the Arctic in November running 20 degrees Celsius above normal in places, climate scientists are describing it as a “climate emergency.”

Climate Change Has Already Altered Nearly Every Ecosystem on Earth

<http://commondreams.org/news/2016/11/11/climate-change-has-already-altered-nearly-every-ecosystem-earth>

'Game Over' for Climate? Report Warns Warming Is Still Underestimated

Researchers say "business as usual" could actually put planet on track for 4.78°C to 7.36°C rise by 2100

<http://commondreams.org/news/2016/11/10/game-over-climate-report-warns-warming-still-underestimated>

Water Contamination

In other news of shale gas research, The US EPA just released its final report on fracking and water contamination. The final version deleted the confusing statement in the draft version that the agency hadn't found evidence of “widespread, systemic impacts on drinking water,” despite citing numerous cases of contamination in the report.

This deletion followed journalistic investigations that found that “unknown persons” inserted the phrase at the last minute, and the agency's independent Science Advisory Board voted overwhelmingly to remove the phrase, because the evidence didn't support it.

Therefore, the final report does not make any statement about how widespread contamination may be. Instead, the report simply lays out the evidence, which details cases of water contamination at every stage of the fracking process, including: while withdrawing water for fracking; while handling fracking fluids, chemicals and produced water; while injecting fracking fluids into wells lacking adequate integrity; and while discharging inadequately treated fracking wastewater.

We should never again hear the absurd claim that fracking is safe and has never caused any water contamination.

Final EPA Study Confirms Fracking Contaminates Drinking Water

http://www.ecowatch.com/epa-fracking-water-contamination-2144968213.html?utm_source=EcoWatch+List&utm_campaign=94aabb0b18-MailChimp+Email+Blast&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_49c7d43dc9-94aabb0b18-85328537

Public Health

In 2011, the American Public Health Association issued a statement taking a wait-and-see attitude about shale gas, due to a lack of studies on the issue.

Since that time, numerous studies have been done, many associating shale gas with serious health problems. This moved the Association to update its statement in 2016 to say,

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"Environmental and health impacts are evident at every stage of unconventional gas development."

"Mounting empirical evidence shows harm to the environment and to human health, and we have no idea what the long-term effects might be."

"Ignoring the body of evidence, to us, is not a viable option anymore."

The Rush to Drill for Natural Gas: A Five-Year Update

<http://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/abs/10.2105/AJPH.2016.303398?journalCode=ajph>

Unconventional oil and gas development and risk of childhood leukemia: Assessing the evidence

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2016.10.072>

Earthquakes

Studies have now also directly tied earthquakes to fracking in Canada. This is in addition to the mountain of evidence and studies linking earthquakes to wastewater injection wells.

Fault activation by hydraulic fracturing in western Canada

<http://science.sciencemag.org/content/early/2016/11/16/science.aag2583>

Miscellaneous

Abroad, there is now a global anti-fracking movement and new bans and moratoria. Clean energy and clean jobs continue to grow at a record pace, making electricity at record low costs. Meanwhile fossil fuel jobs continue to decline. Hope lives.