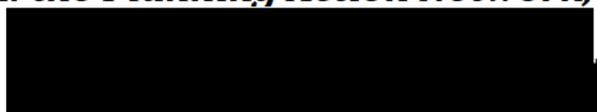


PLan: the Planning Action Network, Inc



21.3.2017

The Secretary,
Hydraulic Fracturing Taskforce,
PO Box 4396,
Darwin, NT 0801
Mailto: fracking.inquiry@nt.gov.au

PLan Submission to the Scientific Inquiry into Hydraulic
Fracturing in the Northern Territory

Dear Sir/Madam,

We are aware that the date for ordinary submissions closed on 10 March, 2017, that the Inquiry is still collecting information throughout the NT, on submissions relating to your inquiry on behalf of the NT Government.

We ask that our short submission be accepted for your consideration.

1. Who are We ?

PLan: the Planning Action Network, Inc is an independent community organization which has been operating for almost 25 years. Our prime object is to achieve balance in urban and rural planning, so that the needs of the community are heard by government.

Other urgent calls on our time have meant that we were unable to make a submission before this. We were also somewhat daunted by the 'scientific' nomenclature of the inquiry. However, we are encouraged now by the broadness

of your definitions of 'Environment' and 'Associated Activities'.

2. Our sources of Information and our Position on Fracking

Our submission is based on years of wide reading - local and international, studying video clips on You-tube, working with allied more specialist community groups, and listening to those who have directly experienced horizontal fracking, and those who are threatened with it on their land.

3. Political and Corporate Aspects

PLan is a strictly an apolitical, evidence based organization. Nevertheless, PLan must be remain aware of the politizicing of issues by others, and lobbying by corporate bodies. The oil and gas industry can afford to be regularly represented in the media, in advertisements, editorials, and reporters articles in supplements supporting the industry.

4. Misrepresentation of public concerns.

We are much annoyed allegations again and again that the community does not understand the distinct nature of the deep shale - based fracking being proposed in the NT. THIS IS NOT TRUE. The oil and gas industry is profit driven, and prepared to take risks. Governments are concerned about their economies. However, at thus stage, there are too many risks with this type of fracturing.

Prominent members of the CLP claim that the public misunderstands that the same fracking method (horizontal) has been used in Central Australia for many years. This is NOT TRUE. Thus have they dismissed the community's concerns as MYTH based. This cannot be accepted.

There is no confusion either with Coal Seam Gas (CSG) processes in other states.

The community and its leaders are well informed, and there is no reason in this day and age that we should not be. Those against horizontal fracking are not politically aligned.

5. Here then, is a list of some of PPlan's concerns. As we are a network, we anticipate that many of these are reflected in the wider community.

5.1 Water Security

The Northern Territory is very much dependent in the quality of ground water, outside urban areas, almost entirely so. Oil and gas activities suddenly endorsed by the Minister Tollner late in the CLP's term, in the Beetaloo Basin are a risk because of the huge area covered by the Basin. There can NO HORIZONTAL FRACKING IN THE NT WITH NO EXCEPTIONS.

Aboriginal communities are for the most part dependent on subsurface water resources, as is the remote cattle industry. Properties in the Barkly region depend on watering cattle with unattended automatic bores.

Problems could arise from drilling itself, but also from the use of concoctions to stimulate the release of oil and gas.

5.2 Destruction and Pollution of Surface lands by Drilling

We have seen by photos and videos how a fracking regime can destroy the amenity of rural land by creating a pock marked surface covered with access piping and roads. Many in the US have been driven off their properties by poisoned air and waters, after reassuring promises from drillers that nothing adverse would happen from drilling agreements.

We understand the major NT pastoralist organisation have shown their opposition.

5.3 Aboriginal Communities at risk

Unless there is strong legislation categorily banning all horizontal fracking in the NT, there will be a temptation for individual Aboriginal communities not well informed about all the risks accepting money for horizontal fracking on their land, with adverse and social widespread consequences.

5.4 Regulation of Individual Drilling Operators

It has long been stated by the NT Government that no horizontal fracking would ever be permitted without proper regulation. This assurance is in itself problematical.

We understand that drillers are certificated at various levels of expertise. Horizontal fracking is complex and involves toxic and volatile concoctions, often secret. If horizontal fracking is approved, a rash of drilling could be expected in many remote parts of the NT. Already experienced drillers are being asked to 'be present' to drilling situations. How could the regulations be properly implemented and policed.

5.5 Implementation of Compliance

The NT already struggles with the rehabilitation of legacy mines all over the NT, like Rum Jungle. It also has unresolved longstanding unresolved issues with existing operations, such as the Macarthur River Mine.

The expectation is that an approval of horizontal fracking in the NT would bring a whirlwind of proponents, some of

which would be with large national and international companies.

Though the government might then favour dealing with larger companies, it may fail in control and fail to match their legal capacities. This is not an unusual situation with small and inexperienced jurisdictions.

5.6 Environmental Impacts

The Inquiry has been wise to extend its interest to a broad definition of 'Environment' as follows:

- '(a) the well being of humans
- (b) structures made or modified by humans
- (c) the amenity values of an area
- (d) economic, cultural and social conditions'

It should be aware that the NT Government's Environmental Protection Authority's capacity and resources are as yet very limited.

6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

There is enormous pressure from the oil and gas industry, on the new NT Government, based on economics, to allow horizontal fracturing in the NT.

The implications of taking a 'RISK', and allowing horizontal fracking in any part of the NT at present, are too great.

MACLINCH

Convener,

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