

Fracking

Hydraulic fracturing, or 'hydrofracturing', commonly called fracking, is a technique used to release petroleum, natural gas or other substances for extraction. There is no lack of information on the internet about fracking both pro and anti, although with increased public awareness the anti – fracking material seems to be in the lead. The pro-fracking industrial, commercial, and government information makes it into the press and other media which lends it an aura of credibility (warranted or not).

It is easy to be overwhelmed by the information available and to want to seek a simplified version of risks and benefits. There really are not any such versions, often because there is so much unknown, unproven, unchecked and undocumented both pro and anti. If it looks simple, then someone is likely trying to make their point. This may lead to speculation on both sides. Reports on fracking often seem to me to be examples of Statistical Gymnastics!!

Many, perhaps most, residents of this island have never visited the selected areas of Co Leitrim and Co Fermanagh proposed for shale gas extraction. They do not resemble in any way, the great American/Canadian plains. Greg Palast, American investigative reporter, asked us to consider the logistics of transforming and bringing into production these areas of Fermanagh and Leitrim necessitating the movement on small local roads and through farmland of large heavy earth moving and construction machinery to create the concrete 'pads' which occupy 0.75 acres/0.3 hectares each, with possibly 60 built one mile apart, and just the physical damage to ancient water flows. That is without getting to the functioning wells and environmental impact with massive water consumption and effluents; possible chemical release into air, water and soil.

“But what about jobs?”, I always hear. First, do not lose sight of the likely productive lifetime of these wells - only 20 to 50 years. Low paid short-lived jobs will be there during construction. Few locals will be needed during production for which skilled staff will be hired from elsewhere. The concrete etc is unlikely to be removed after their use has stopped.

The following is from a press release of New York Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers):

The organization called upon political representatives to prohibit fracking in New York State, stating that the practice is “inconsistent with our faith and practices,

which include a commitment to integrity, community, equality, and care of God's creation." It expressed its support for legislation and incentives that support renewable and sustainable energy, protect people and the environment, and foster a positive economy. The Yearly Meeting directed its clerk (presiding officer) and general secretary (staff executive) to communicate its stand to elected officials, other Quaker organizations and other faith communities, relevant environmental organizations, and the press. Finally, it asked its members to examine their own lives to find ways to reduce their need for fossil fuel energy and to consider joining in non-violent protest actions against fracking.

And my concern is for Earth. As someone said at a Faith and Fracking meeting, the gas will be there until it is extracted. Could we not wait until the extraction process is known as much as possible to be safe in most respects? As another said, "They will trample all over God's beautiful creation". I would ask if corporate profit should trump the gift of Creation.

*Cherish Creation.
Defend its Diversity.
The Earth is the Lord's.*

*From Wikipedia:

Induced hydraulic fracturing or hydrofracturing, commonly known as fracing, fraccing, or **Fracking**, is a technique used to release petroleum, natural gas (including shale gas, tight gas, and coal seam gas), or other substances for extraction.[1] This type of fracturing creates fractures from a wellbore drilled into reservoir rock formations.

Proponents of hydraulic fracturing point to the economic benefits from vast amounts of formerly inaccessible [HYPERLINK](#)

"<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hydrocarbons>"hydrocarbons the process can extract.[4] Opponents point to potential [HYPERLINK](#)

"[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Environment_\(biophysical\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Environment_(biophysical))"environmental impacts, including contamination of [HYPERLINK](#)

"http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ground_water"ground water, risks to [HYPERLINK](#)

"http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_quality"air quality, the migration of gases and hydraulic fracturing chemicals to the surface, surface contamination from spills and flowback and the [HYPERLINK](#)

"http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Health_effect"health effects of these.[5] For these reasons hydraulic fracturing has come under scrutiny internationally, with some countries suspending or banning it.[6][7]

Links:

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Fermanagh Fracking Awareness Network: www.frackaware.com/wordpress/

David Suzuki

www.davidsuzuki.org/blogs/science-matters/2012/09/whats-the-fracking-problem-with-natural-gas

Petition:

www.nofrackingireland.wordpress.com

Fracking Free Ireland

www.frackingfreeireland.org/