



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Select Committee Regarding the Risks and Benefits of Hydraulic Fracturing

33rd Yukon Legislative Assembly

PROGRESS REPORT

February 28, 2014

On May 6, 2013 the Yukon Legislative Assembly adopted Motion #433, thereby establishing the Select Committee Regarding the Risks and Benefits of Hydraulic Fracturing. The Committee's purpose, or mandate, is set out in the motion and it specifies that the Committee is to report to the Legislative Assembly its findings and recommendations on a policy approach to hydraulic fracturing in Yukon.

The all-party Committee's mandate is broad and includes a number of inter-connected responsibilities. The Committee has decided to fulfill its mandate in a phased approach. The first priority is for the Committee to begin to gain a science-based understanding of the technical, environmental, economic, and regulatory aspects of hydraulic fracturing, as well as Yukon's current legislation and regulations relevant to the oil and gas industry. Secondly, the Committee is pursuing its mandate to facilitate an informed public dialogue for the purpose of sharing information on the potential risks and benefits of hydraulic fracturing. The third stage of the Committee's work is gathering input from the Yukon public, First Nations, stakeholders, and stakeholder groups. The Committee will continue to increase its knowledge about hydraulic fracturing during the period of public dialogue and gathering input from community members. The Committee will then be in a position to report its findings and recommendations to the Legislative Assembly.

1. Gaining an understanding of hydraulic fracturing

To date the Committee has spent over 40 hours in meetings, learning about the process of hydraulic fracturing and the context of the legislative and regulatory regime for oil and gas in Yukon. During these meetings, the Committee has heard briefings from a number of individuals and groups, including:

- Department of Environment,
- Department of Justice,
- Department of Energy, Mines and Resources,
- Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board,
- Yukon Water Board,
- Yukon Chamber of Commerce Energy Committee,
- Yukoners Concerned About Oil and Gas Exploration and Development,

- Yukon Conservation Society, and,
- Dr. Brendan Hanley, Chief Medical Officer of Health, Yukon.

In January the Committee traveled to Alberta to tour an active hydraulic fracturing site and to learn about the process further from industry representatives, regulators and community organizations. While in Red Deer and Calgary, the Committee met with representatives from the following organizations:

- Alberta Energy Regulator,
- Sundre Petroleum Operators Group,
- Alberta Surface Rights Group,
- Shlumberger,
- ConocoPhillips,
- Alberta Health Services,
- Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development,
- Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, and
- Cochrane Area Under Siege Coalition (CAUS-C)

All of the presentation materials from the briefings, both in Whitehorse and Alberta, are available at http://www.legassembly.gov.yk.ca/rbhf_briefings.html

2. Facilitating an informed public dialogue

The Committee recently held public proceedings in the Legislative Assembly Chamber with the intention of sharing information on the potential risks and benefits of hydraulic fracturing with the public. Interested Yukoners were invited to observe the proceedings from the public gallery and the audio was broadcast live over the radio and online for anyone who was not able to attend in person. Over the course of two days, the Committee heard eight presentations from groups and individuals who were invited to share their knowledge and perspectives:

- Gilles Wendling, Hydrogeologist,
- BC Oil and Gas Commission,
- The Pembina Institute,
- Industry representatives from EFLO Energy, Inc., Northern Cross (Yukon) Limited and the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers,
- Bernhard Mayer, Professor, Geoscience,
- Rick Chalaturnyk, Professor, Geotechnical Engineering,
- Fort Nelson First Nation, and,
- National Energy Board.

During the presentations, visitors in the public gallery had the opportunity to submit written questions and, after a few questions from members of the Committee, written questions from the gallery were randomly selected for the presenters to answer.

Transcripts of the proceedings, as well as audio and video recordings of each presentation and question session, are available at

http://www.legassembly.gov.yk.ca/rbhf_presentation_materials.html

The Committee will endeavor to provide answers to the remaining questions which were submitted by the public but not asked during the proceedings due to time restrictions.

While the Committee has decided to hold additional public proceedings in Whitehorse, the dates and presenters have not yet been scheduled.

3. Gathering input from the Yukon public, First Nations, and stakeholders

In order to hear the opinions of Yukoners, the Committee will be holding public hearings in Whitehorse, in addition to Watson Lake and Old Crow, the two communities most likely to be affected by oil and gas development. The Committee may choose to hold hearings in other communities if Yukoners submit expressions of interest for such hearings taking place. Individuals who would like to request a hearing in their community may submit their request in writing to the Committee or use the form provided through the Committee's website at http://www.legassembly.gov.yk.ca/rbhf_hearings_survey.html, by May 1, 2014. The schedule for the public hearings has not yet been determined.

The Committee is currently publishing submissions from the public on the Committee's webpage. If Yukoners would like to submit their comments they may do so at http://www.legassembly.gov.yk.ca/rbhf_form.html Submissions may also be sent by email to rbhf@gov.yk.ca

More information on the Committee, including the full motion establishing the Committee, is available at <http://www.legassembly.gov.yk.ca/rbhf.html>