



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Select Committee Regarding the Risks and Benefits of Hydraulic Fracturing

33rd Yukon Legislative Assembly

PROGRESS REPORT

June 19, 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 three phase approach. Firstly, the Committee endeavored 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 pursued its mandate to facilitate an informed public dialogue for the purpose of sharing information on the potential risks and benefits of hydraulic fracturing. Finally, the third stage of the Committee's work is gathering input from the Yukon public, First Nations, stakeholders, and stakeholder groups. 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 70 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 has 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.

The first public proceedings were held January 31 and February 1, 2014. 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.

The Committee recently held additional public proceedings May 27 and 28, 2014. The following experts provided testimony:

- Mark Jaccard, Professor, Resource and Environmental Management,
- Lalita Bharadwaj, Toxicologist,
- Dr. Brendan Hanley, Chief Medical Officer of Health, Yukon,

- Dr. Eilish Cleary, Chief Medical Officer of Health, New Brunswick
- Dr. Charl J. Badenhorst, Regional Medical Health Officer, Northeast Health Service District of British Columbia,
- Donald Reid, Associate Conservation Zoologist, Wildlife Conservation Society Canada, and,
- John Hogg, Vice President, MGM Energy Corp.

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.

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 Faro, Carmacks, Dawson City, Ross River, Haines Junction, Mayo, jointly in Carcross and Tagish, Pelly Crossing, Teslin, Whitehorse, Old Crow, and Watson Lake. Old Crow and Watson Lake were identified as locations for public hearings in Motion #433 and the additional communities were selected based on 290 requests submitted by Yukoners.

The schedule for upcoming public hearings is available on the Committee's webpage. Individuals who would like to present their opinions to the Committee at a hearing are encouraged to pre-register at http://legassembly.gov.yk.ca/rbhf_public_hearings.html or by calling 1-800-661-0408, ext. 5494.

Transcriptions of the public hearing testimony will be posted online following the hearings.

The Committee is currently publishing written 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 or by mail to the following address:

Select Committee Regarding the Risks and Benefits of Hydraulic Fracturing
 Box 2703 (A-9)
 Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 2C6

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