



# Yukon Legislative Assembly

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## **SELECT COMMITTEE REGARDING THE RISKS AND BENEFITS OF HYDRAULIC FRACTURING**

**Public Hearings: Evidence**

**Monday, July 7, 2014 — 1:00 p.m.**

Chair: Patti McLeod

**SELECT COMMITTEE  
REGARDING THE RISKS AND BENEFITS OF  
HYDRAULIC FRACTURING**

**Chair:** Patti McLeod  
**Vice-Chair:** Lois Moorcroft

**Members:** Hon. Currie Dixon  
Darius Elias  
Sandy Silver  
Jim Tredger

**Clerk to the Committee:** Allison Lloyd

**Speakers:** Ivan Bolton  
Kitty Sperling  
John Morin  
Irene Morin  
Florence Etzel  
Bruce Williams  
Doris Bob  
Brian Ladue  
David Dickson  
James Dick  
Verna Nukon  
Dennis Shorty

**EVIDENCE****Ross River, Yukon****Monday, July 7, 2014 — 1:00 p.m.**

**Chair (Ms. McLeod):** Welcome everyone. Before we get started, I just want to invite you all to please help yourself at any time to coffee, juice. There's a lot of food there. I really want to thank the Ross River Dena Council for contributing the food today. It's very much appreciated. Thank you.

I would like to call this hearing to order. This is a hearing of the Yukon Legislative Assembly's Select Committee Regarding the Risks and Benefits of Hydraulic Fracturing.

I'm going to start with introductions of the Committee. I am Patti McLeod. I'm the Chair of the Committee and I'm the representative for Watson Lake.

**Mr. Silver:** Hello, I'm Sandy Silver. I am the MLA for Klondike and the Leader of the Yukon Liberal Party.

**Mr. Tredger:** Good afternoon. My name is Jim Tredger. I am the NDP Member for Mayo-Tatchun. It is an honour to be on the traditional territory of the Ross River Dena Council and I am pleased to be here. I look forward to hearing your stories and your comments on hydraulic fracturing and help us in our deliberations as we look into this important topic. Thank you.

**Ms. Moorcroft:** Good morning, everyone. I'm Lois Moorcroft. I am the MLA for Copperbelt South and the Vice-Chair of the Committee. I also serve as the Official Opposition critic for the Department of Justice, Advanced Education and Highways and Public Works. I'm happy to be in Ross River again and it's nice to see you here. I look forward to hearing from you. We were on Kaska land in Watson Lake the week before last, so now we're at the north end of that.

**Mr. Elias:** Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Darius Elias. I am the MLA for Vuntut Gwitchin in Old Crow. It's a pleasure to be here today in your community to listen to your concerns about hydraulic fracture stimulation. Thank you for attending.

**Chair:** Also present is Allison Lloyd, to my right, who is Clerk to the Committee. Dawn Brown, who is at our registration desk, is helping us with our coordination and keeping us all rolling here. Of course, thank you to our sound and recording staff.

On May 6, 2013, the Yukon Legislative Assembly adopted Motion No. 433, thereby establishing the Select Committee Regarding the Risks and Benefits and Hydraulic Fracturing. The Committee's purpose or mandate is set out in the motion and it includes a number of interconnected responsibilities. The Committee has decided to fulfill its mandate in a three-phase approach.

Firstly, the Committee endeavoured 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. The Committee invited experts to share their knowledge over four days of proceedings which were open to the public and are now available on our website.

Finally, the third stage of the Committee's work is gathering input from the Yukon public, First Nations, stakeholders and stakeholder groups. This is the purpose of today's hearing and the other hearings held in communities across the territory.

After these hearings, the Committee will be in a position to report its findings and recommendations to the Legislative Assembly. A summary of the Committee's activities to date is available at the registration desk. All of the information that the Committee has collected, including presentations from experts on various aspects of hydraulic fracturing, is available on the website.

The Committee will not be presenting information on the risks and benefits of hydraulic fracturing at this hearing. This time is allotted and devoted to hearing from as many Yukoners as possible. The way the Committee has been operating in communities is to allow five minutes for each presenter to speak and, if there is time, to invite you up for an additional five minutes. But we have, at this time, four speakers who have put their names forward to address the Committee so we're not going to hold to that five-minute rule here.

If you would like to present to the Committee, it is helpful if you register at the registration desk. However, that will not prevent you from addressing the Committee should you change your mind in the course of events today.

I would like to remind everyone that this hearing is being recorded and transcribed. Everything you say will be on the public record and posted on the Committee's website.

With that, we're going to get started. I would like to invite to the table at the front Ivan Bolton please. Any time you're ready, sir.

**Mr. Bolton:** Is this thing working? I can hear it. Okay, back when I was younger — back in my twenties — I was the foreman on the Savannah Creek oil lease in southwestern Alberta. They didn't call it "hydraulic fracturing" at that time; they called it "acidizing". The holes were straight down; they weren't off to the side like they are now. I've seen first-hand what a natural gas leak can do. We had a well — it was our number eight well. We got a gas leak after they acidized — a fracture of about 12 miles long, across the valley to the south of us. It leaked gas into Savannah Creek, which ran into the Oldman River.

Now this gas — we didn't know it was leaking at the time and somebody drove through it with their vehicle and it blew. It not only wiped him out, but it destroyed thousands of acres of forest, as well as took the life of the guy in the vehicle.

Now I'm not a good speaker, so I told the story and I'm going to leave it there. Anybody got a question?

**Chair:** Thank you very much.

I would ask Kitty Sperling, please, to come up. Any time you're ready.

**Ms. Sperling:** I'm not really prepared with what I wanted to say. I just want to speak from the heart basically. First off, I want to thank you for coming and at least having a public hearing about this, although having said that, I'm trying to be hopeful about the process in terms of having the public be able to effect change with any type of direction that the government will go on in terms of hydraulic fracturing. But I'm really doubtful in terms of whether or not the voices of the people will be able to be strong enough to be heard and will sway any type of process in future about the direction of the government in terms of energy sources. I say that just because of the LNG plant being okayed despite much opposition to that. I don't — we're still proceeding with that as an alternative fuel source. It's starting under construction. So I'm trying to remain hopeful that any negative or alternative voices that are being expressed regarding hydraulic fracturing will actually be heard and acted on.

I guess what I first want to talk about is the fact that — I mean, we talk about the risks and benefits. Everything is couched in risks and benefits — that duality. From what I can gather and the information that I've sort of looked at on-line and through other sources of information is that the benefits are linked solely to economics and they're not linked to respect for the environment. They're not linked to respect for alternative fuel sources, alternative energy sources, natural energy sources. They're not linked to the voices of the people saying that hydraulic fracturing is very, very damaging.

The benefits, I think, solely lie on the backs of economics and I think that is very, very short-sighted because the risks of hydraulic fracturing are just becoming known and just becoming really apparent. One of the things that I read yesterday was the fact that they've been doing hydraulic fracturing down in the States — in the southern States — and there was a science study that came out. I don't know how scientific it is — I have to admit that I didn't vet that source — but they're linking earthquakes to hydraulic fracturing and that's really troublesome, because we don't actually know what the end results will be. We don't even know what will happen when we start the process of hydraulic fracturing.

I've heard arguments about "Oh, it's innocuous. It's just great. It gives us this fuel source and yes, it uses a lot of water," but my God, when you take those stories from people and you see what is actually happening to the environment and you see what is happening to people, it stops you dead in your tracks.

I'm still — like I said, I'm trying to remain hopeful, but to me, it's an absolute no-brainer that there should be absolutely no hydraulic fracturing anywhere in the Yukon — anywhere in the world. I mean, we're damaging, you know, the lifeblood of Mother Earth basically. We're damaging the opportunity for the earth to replenish itself, to be able to be vibrant. I find that very shameful that in this day and age that we cannot find alternative fuel sources and alternative ways to

effect any type of benefit in terms of alternative energy sources.

Having said that, I'm relatively new to finding alternative energy sources. I have to admit that it's only from my move to the communities that I've actually developed a real heartfelt, soul-felt connection to the land and it has blossomed my opportunity to explore alternative fuel sources. I actually have a couple of articles that I just pulled off the Internet.

One of them has to do with geothermal conversions that are done in Manitoba. It's talking about how it can produce quite a lot of heat from the ground. I know for a fact that the Yukon has looked at such an endeavour, particularly in Whitehorse — particularly just north of the — I think it's north of the airport there. There has been a 20-year study, I think, done and that there was actually some opportunity to explore geothermal. Whatever happened to that? Where did it go? Why aren't we doing that, you know? Geothermal is something that is renewable; it is accessible. If Manitoba is doing it and they find it viable, why aren't we? Especially after all of the information that has been gleaned from the last 20 years, why aren't we doing something like that? I know that there is geothermal everywhere in the Yukon. I mean, it's a no-brainer. The Yukon Research Centre — I'm sure could be asked to research that and work in partnership with the government to be able to find out what the geothermal opportunities are. But why aren't we looking at that?

The second article that I pulled off the Internet was wind turbines. I know that Haeckel Hill has, you know, the giant wind turbine that they have and it has been under lots of problems in the past. It hasn't been consistently producing energy. However, they have a new efficient wind turbine that works on a screw technology and it's going to be coming out, I think this month, actually, throughout the world. It's called the Archimedes windmill design and it's supposed to have an 80-percent efficiency rate — pretty magnificent stuff. Why aren't we pursuing that? Why aren't we looking at wind?

Solar is another thing. Solar — you know, I've heard lots of complaints about, "Oh we don't get enough solar in the wintertime. The batteries have to be blah, blah, blah" — big, you know, obnoxiously, strafed together. But there are some technologies coming out now about solar that are mind-boggling. Unfortunately, I didn't pull anything off, but they're actually saying that shadow is not necessarily or cloud cover is not necessarily an indicator of lack of solar power.

I just offer those as opportunity to explore. It sort of leads me to one final thing that I've been tossing around in my head for a long time. That is, with the amount of money and millions that we're spending on LNG — I think it's up to \$42 million-plus — not to mention the pricing of the new technology trucks that are supposed to be going up and down the highway that can handle the rocks and the potholes and what have you. Many, many millions are being spent there. Why isn't there an opportunity to take those millions and give them back to the people and make the people responsible for perhaps finding their own ways of generating electricity through these wind turbines, through solar, through

geothermal — whatever? Make the individual responsible and see if the individual can feed that energy back into the grid so that everybody is responsible for producing energy. Do you see what I mean? Everybody can be responsible for their own self and any excess can be fed back into the grid.

I know that there has been talk about trying to find the processes and legislation available to folks to be able to do that. I don't know how — I'm not clear on exactly where that is. I do know that some people have the opportunity of feeding their excess energy back into the grid but I think that it's still a difficult situation. I think it needs to be more streamlined in terms of — if we can come up with our own wind turbine and it produces enough energy that feeds our houses and produces an excess, why can't we put that back into the system? Just a thought.

I think that's all I'm going to say right now. Thank you again for the opportunity to speak.

**Chair:** Thank you very much. John Morin, please.

**Mr. Morin:** Good afternoon. I'm not going to take the five minutes. My feeling regarding fracking makes me nervous. It makes me nervous on the side of the untold stories. We hear about the danger of, you know, cracking the plate or whatever or filling any holes they make — like with cement and whatever. But there is no knowing underground — if there's a crack anywhere — where this stuff can leak — where anything can leak and then contaminate the waters. What else can it do? How many wildlife, how many of us start developing disease and things like that? Because maybe we don't know always hear things that happen. I know there's a lot of big companies out there that when they have a mistake happening, it can take years before anybody find out. But how many diseases have there been? How many new sickness or whatever happen because of it?

If it can create earthquakes, I myself personally would be 100-percent against it because I believe that if I'm sitting anywhere where it's dangerous — where earthquakes, such as Vancouver, I don't want to sit there. That's why I moved from there. I kind of like my life and I want to keep it for a little while longer.

If it's any development that will create things like that or possibly could create something like that, I don't think that I would want any of my friends here in town — anybody I've met or any place as far as that go — be under those stress, under that danger.

Yes, development is awesome. It is good to have — it is good to have the mineral, it's good to have the oil, it's good to have whatever we're looking for — that I approve that we do have to have some type of different type of resources. But there's got to be some other ways of doing — getting that oil. Might be a little bit more complicated, but there's got to be some other way that it doesn't risk everybody. So, as far as I'm concerned, that's my opinion on the subject. It doesn't make me that I'm right, but it feels right — what I said there. Thank you.

**Chair:** Thank you. Irene Morin, please.

**Ms. Morin:** Good afternoon. Before I start, I'd like to ask a question. Are all of you people from the Yukon?

**Chair:** Yes, ma'am, we are. We are elected officials of the Yukon Legislature.

**Ms. Morin:** Everybody? Okay. I'd like to mention that I appreciate Ivan's talk. I think that we have a lot to learn from old experiences and I want to say to Kitty that I 100-percent approve what she says. I'd like to have my name put under her findings also.

The only information or background I have is from listening to people, watching some programs on TV about fracking — which I found very scary myself. A few years ago — I think in the 70s — around Texas area, they did fracking. After everything was done, they covered up the soil, they built some houses. People bought these houses. People lived there. Then young families developed diseases — scary diseases. These families were not even related, but they developed the same symptoms, same diseases — because they were neighbours, because they were drinking the water that was contaminated. They lost family members. How many of us want to lose family members because of drinking water that is contaminated? Our water is good. Bottled water is good. But even better than that is our well water.

We're one of the — we have a couple people in town who have a well and we're one of the lucky ones. Our water is awesome. It's always cold. It's always fresh. We've been there four years and we have not developed any diseases. We'd like to keep it like that.

What about the fresh air that we breathe here? We've lived in many big cities along the years. Whenever, wherever we live, people are working nine to five to do a living, not thinking about the little communities where there's nothing happening. But there is so much happening here in the little communities, trying to preserve what is right, trying to preserve what is good.

We are responsible for our actions. We are responsible for the earth. We are responsible to maintain it, to make it right, and not to damage it for our future generations. One day, we will all pass away, and whatever bad actions we've done, we will be asked to account for it. Who wants to be responsible for something that will damage people's lives for generations and generations?

People down south have to have town water recycled, cleaned and then put back into the faucet for people to drink again. Here, we don't have to have that. How much of our earth — how much of our water in Canada is still good to drink? What's the percentage of the water that is still drinkable? We still have fish in the lakes. That means the water is still good. But for how long?

I think we are responsible. We have to take responsibility and we have to act upon it. Thank you.

**Chair:** Thank you very much.

I would like to invite Florence Etzel to come up, please.

**Ms. Etzel:** Before I sit down, I'd like to — could I take this? [*Kaska spoken. Text unavailable.*]

I'm just saying that — just saying to the people here is look at all these people that come to Whitehorse and look at the ones that showed up. It seems pretty equal. Also, I said that if my mom was alive — she passed on in November — she would have said, "What is all this talk about?" "What is this frickin' fracking all about?", she would say, and I would have to answer her question.

I knew about this meeting that was coming up, and I've been busy and I was going to say, well, I'm going to get all the information that I can. I'm going to look it up. I'm going to do this and that, and find out for myself and be really prepared when I come to the meeting. I'd like to commend all the people that talked before me and Kitty — a lot of information — and Ivan.

We can learn so much from our elders. I think we need more information given to our elders so that they can understand about the process and be informed in our own language, so that they can really understand the ins and outs about fracking and how it will affect us, not only for this generation now but for the generations to come.

The way I understand fracking is that it is a process where it takes a lot of water — a lot of our good water, like Irene was saying, to go through that process. It's put in the ground or drilled into the ground, along with a whole pile of chemicals that we don't know anything about. That goes into the ground and then the rocks or whatever that is under there is broken up. All our water is under there, too; all the table is made out of water and all that. It goes into that and that's how the gas or whatever is extracted from the ground. So that's what I know about fracking.

I also know that we are situated on the Tintina Trench and it's a fault line. That's where Ross River is. I don't think any of us are ready for an earthquake right now. We all know that we are all going to go someday, but, you know, why speed up the process? Yeah, that's true.

Not only that, as a First Nation person — I was born and raised here in Ross River. My family from way back, my grandparents — I was actually born in a tent with my grandmother and my mom. That's how we were raised, that's how we were taught. That's how we were taught our values. We always relied on the land for all our needs. I really am afraid that if this fracking happens in our community or in our territory, we will no longer have that to rely on for our living and for all our needs — for our food. One hundred percent, or most of our food, is from the land — our berries, our plants and everything — water. We have good, clean air.

Also I would like to add, as a residential school survivor myself, there was a lot of harm done to us in the past. So now we rely more on the land for our healing. We rely solely on the land for healing ourselves and, you know, to get back on the land and continue our remaining years teaching our children so they can carry on.

Because I don't think it's so much today about how much we know about fracking — all the facts, and you know, you got to talk good and smart and have all the information in front of you before you stand up here to talk about it. But I

think it's just as important to say what's in your heart and also to talk for our ancestors who have gone before us to say that, you know, they are still here with us. We still have their teachings. We would like to continue with that.

I am kind of getting emotional here because I think about all our elders who have gone. I know that all of you sitting here in front of us — I know some by name, but I know Darius. Darius — we were up camping one summer up at Gold Creek on the south Canol and he came to visit. He came all the way up to say hi. So hi, Darius, welcome to Ross River.

Thank you.

**Chair:** Thank you very much.

I don't have anyone else on the list, but is there anybody else who would like to present to the Committee at this time?

**Unidentified speaker:** (inaudible)

**Chair:** Excuse me, sir. I'm going to have to ask you to come to the microphone, because we are recording. Please state your name for the record.

**Mr. Williams:** I am Bruce Williams. I have gone to many meetings here over 30 years — many — and justice circles, everything. I am really amazed and astounded how this is called a hearing and there was no opening prayer and elder invited here from this nation. I just can't believe it. I simply cannot believe it. All the people sitting here say that you're from the Yukon, and you don't understand the protocol of not only this nation, but nations everywhere in Canada — native nations — of an opening prayer and an elder present. *[Kaska spoken. Text unavailable.]*

**Chair:** Thank you. I think what we will do right now is recess for 15 minutes. Please help yourselves to some food and some drinks. Perhaps after the recess, others would like to get up and speak to the Committee, because we are here to hear from Yukoners. If you are comfortable, you can let Dawn know at the registration table; otherwise, we will just have you come to the mic and state your name. Thank you.

*Recess*

**Chair:** Welcome back, everyone, to our public hearing. I want to welcome the new people who have arrived. Before we get started in our second half of our hearing, I'd like to correct an oversight on our part and I would like to invite Doris Bob to come and offer us a prayer. Thank you.

*Prayer*

**Chair:** Thank you very much. We do have some additional presenters. For those of you who are just joining us, I just want to remind folks that everything is being recorded and will appear on-line.

So please, Mr. David Dickson, if you would come up to the mic, please.

**Unidentified speaker:** (inaudible)

**Chair:** Could I ask you to take the mic, please, so that we can get this question recorded? This is Chief Brian Ladue.

**Mr. Ladue:** I just asked the question: Is everybody here well-aware exactly what the intention of this assembly is, so that it's clear to everybody so they know exactly what's being asked of them and what it's for? Like, Lois explained to me clearly what the process here is about today. So if we can let everybody know so that everybody is clear on exactly what is being done, then everybody will know to give the answers. Thanks.

**Chair:** Thank you very much. We did go through this at the start of the hearing. I will repeat what was read into the record again for the benefit of everyone who has joined us recently.

The Committee was established with Motion No. 433. This is a Committee Regarding the Risks and Benefits of Hydraulic Fracturing. The Committee's purpose, or mandate, is set out in the motion, and it includes a number of interconnected responsibilities. The Committee has decided to fulfill its mandate in a three-phase approach.

Firstly, the Committee endeavoured 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. The Committee invited experts to share their knowledge over four days of proceedings, which were open to the public and are now available on our website.

Finally, the third stage of the Committee's work is gathering input from the Yukon public, First Nations, stakeholders and stakeholder groups. This is the purpose of today's hearing and other hearings being held across the territory. After these hearings, the Committee will be in a position to report its findings and recommendations to the Yukon Legislature.

A summary of the Committee's work to date is available at the registration table, and please help yourself to a copy. All of the information the Committee has collected, including presentations from experts on various aspects of hydraulic fracturing, is available on the Committee's website.

As we have said in all of our public hearings, the Committee will not be answering questions or presenting information on the risks and benefits of hydraulic fracturing. This is the time that's allotted to Yukoners to present their thoughts to the Committee.

Thank you very much, and I hope that clarifies what the purpose of the Committee is today.

David Dickson, please.

**Mr. Dickson:** Hello, my name is David Dickson. I'm from Watson Lake. I belong to Liard First Nation, but I have a lot of relatives up here. I work up here. My brother has a trapline that's about 80 kilometres from here. I was just coming down — picking up a worker — and I work up in Ketzá — Ketzá gold mine, about 80 kilometres out of here. Coming past here, I see all these vehicles, and I kind of

figured you'd be talking about fracking, so I came over here — because fracking has a lot of issues — a lot of people are against it. I'm not too sure how many people are for it, but I've watched some videos on it. It's kind of really disturbing for me, if you want to play with our water. That's our water.

Some of the things that companies say when they drill in and use the water — the ingredients, according to what I see on videos and documentaries, they say it's a company secret. They won't disclose what kind of chemicals they pump into the underground.

Because this is our land and this is our water — the people behind me, they're part of the land also. A lot of people here are really traditional and live off the land. I don't think you really can explain the full impact of what's going to happen if the water becomes polluted here.

The ingredients should not be kept secret, because it's pumped into our land. The effects on animals drinking the water — what is it? I'm not too sure if what I say is correct or if companies do disclose what they pump into the land, but these are just from the top of my head. I was just driving past. What I think — once you pump chemicals and stuff into the land — probably about three, four kilometres down — whatever you do to this land is not reversible. You can't undo what you did.

I'm not too sure what you guys — if you guys had a meeting in Watson Lake. You had a meeting in Watson Lake? I'm not too sure what you heard from my native people down there also. They probably say the same thing as what I said, because according to our elders, way, way back, Liard First Nation, Ross River — all Kaska nations — we're fully — 100-percent overlap. So what's happening here is going to happen — it's going to affect us all over.

I don't have that much to say, but it's really — it's something. We as native people, we're too nice to non-native people. That's what happened to us. We invite people in and then they start taking all the land, start doing this, start doing that. You know, sometimes I hope we weren't nice people. You guys wouldn't be here if we weren't nice people. We're good people. So in those terms, you have to try to respect us. Respect our people, respect our land, respect our water and not get dominated by big money, by Shell Oil or whoever is out there that's pumping money into the economy.

Like my old people say — they say the money's not going to last. The land is going to be here. That's why my people never signed land claims or anything. The land will be here. Like, some posters say, once you find out you can't eat money. Thank you.

**Chair:** Thank you very much.

I'd like to ask Chief Brian Ladue, please.

**Mr. Ladue:** All right, thanks. You heard a member of our Kaska nation, David Dickson. You can hear the passion in his voice when he speaks. He's one of many that have that passion, you know. We did — we held out for a long time without surrendering our rights and titles to our land, knowing that if we did, then you guys could come in here and do whatever you guys would like.

Now we're sitting at the table and we're saying that we are opposed to hydraulic fracturing because we know, based on some of the research and some of the things we've seen and heard, that this stuff is irreversible. When it goes into the water, how are you going to change that water back? Water finds a way. Water finds a way through mountains. Water finds its way through rocks. Once damaged, it's damaged.

So if hydraulic fracturing comes into our traditional territory, you're going to have a fight upon your hands and it's going to be 5,000-plus people strong. So we're recommending that the Committee put a ban on it until the technology is there that will reduce the impacts to the water. We are not convinced right now that pumping all those chemicals into the water is not harmful. It will surface. It will cause problems.

You look at Texas and the fracturing that they have been doing down there — we see it all over YouTube. We see videos of people lighting their faucets on fire. You see families that are getting sick — horribly sick. They can't even drink the water out of their wells. You cannot wave money in front of us and say, "This is the cost for us to come in and destroy your land." Those bills don't have a picture of a prime minister or a minister. They have a skull and crossbones on those bills. We are not willing to sell out our land for that much damage and effect to our animals and to our vegetation, to our drinking water. We are here because we are land stewards. We have been handed down instructions to take care of our land. This is where we take a stand.

As you are well-aware of, we are obviously against fracturing in our traditional territory. Further to that, council and I spoke, and we are going to put a ban on it — a BCR.

I think my other council members want to speak as well. I don't want to be the only one speaking here, but I wanted to be the first to speak. We carry the health and well-being of our children's children in our hands. Water, you guys, is the most important asset we have in the Yukon. So you guys need to be thinking about how should we preserve the water here, and not being blinded by the almighty dollar that's being flashed in front of you. It's not worth even to be voted back in, if that's what you are looking for.

That's all I have to say, but I will invite my council members up to speak as well. Thank you.

**Chair:** Thank you very much, Chief Ladue.

Please state your name for the record.

**Mr. Dick:** My name is James Dick. I am one of the councillors for Ross River Dena Council.

I always see this issue of hydraulic fracturing — when you watch documentaries of people going against hydraulic fracturing and they are going across the United States, letting people know what it does — what it does to the animals, what it does to the people. Like Brian said, there is something wrong with hydraulic fracturing when you can go to your own tap and light it on fire. There is something wrong when farmers have to go and get water for their animals and people can't drink that water any more because it's contaminated.

I know that with hydraulic fracturing, they got to put a lot of chemicals down there, a lot of water, a lot of sand just to

release that gas. It doesn't cause problems just in a certain area; it causes problems in a big area. That water goes somewhere when it's underground. It doesn't just stay in one spot. It takes millions and millions of litres of water to just fracture that rock, just to release that gas.

I know all that because I watch a lot of documentaries about hydraulic fracturing at home. It causes a lot of problems. If you watch documentaries and films that they film about hydraulic fracturing across the United States and Alberta — Alberta, in Grande Prairie, you can light your tap on fire just because of the chemicals. What does that do to the animals if it comes up here in the southeastern Yukon? What is it going to do? Have you asked those questions? Do you guys even know yourselves what it does? Do you guys watch documentaries about what it does? It affects everything. You guys aren't the ones that are living in this country. You should come down here if it ever happens — which it is not going to happen.

Go to Alberta or go down to the United States and go see what it does. Go visit those people, instead of just listening to those people that's providing the money for you guys to travel around. Go see those people and watch some of the documentaries that are going on. I am not sure if you guys do, but I suggest that you do watch it. I don't want to see my country destroyed just for gas.

All because the companies say we should go after this, it's going to make a lot of money — that money is not going to last for a long time. Then we are going to have to go make more money. That money only lasts for a little bit.

We care for this country. We don't want to see it destroyed. It's the water that we got to look after. That's the life giver to everything, even us. I am pretty sure those people that own those big companies, they know that. But they are so blinded with that money, they are going to do anything just to get that dollar. It's the water and animals that we got to look after. That's what provides the life to us, to everybody. Even the animals that's being raised on farms — they need that water just so we can survive — everybody, even you guys. Okay?

**Chair:** Thank you very much. Does any other person wish to address the Committee?

Please state your name for the record.

**Ms. Nukon:** Hello, my name is Verna Nukon. I am a councillor for my First Nation here. I grew up here. I was born here. My father is originally from Old Crow, Yukon. He moved here because he was attracted to the beauty of our country here. We get the majority of the Yukon coming here every year to hunt, to fish. We are kind to every visitor that comes to our community. We welcome them; we allow them to hunt on our land and to take our caribou and our moose.

We recently had a big rally regarding our bridge. There were hundreds of people at the river trying to save our little bridge down there. I think it will be twice as big if you allow this fracking to come into this territory.

When I was younger — I lost my grandmother this past year — you know, she always told us growing up that this was



her way of life. She would go up in the mountains with her dogs and dog-pack. She wouldn't be anywhere else but on the land. She always told me, "Don't ever let anybody take this land from us; this is the only thing that we know. It's the only thing that we love." We go out on the land even on the weekends just to get our water. We don't drink tap water in Ross River. We go out on the creeks and get our freshwater from there. Our salmon is coming. What if one day our salmon disappears?

Speaking to another elder — he passed on. He's from Old Crow. He talked to me about fracking coming. He said, "People are going to try to come to your land — Kaska land." He said, "Watch." He said, "Even that little bee drinks that water. What are you guys going to do if you don't have anything left to give to your kids? Even the littlest creature on the land relies on that water." I always remember what he said to me. Everything that elders have told us in meetings — even on the street, they tell us things.

We were kind enough to let mining companies take over — we don't see very much. We have poor housing and we fight every day just to try and get funding for our little community. What are we going to get out of fracking? Probably nothing — a bunch of promises from the government that we'll get this, we'll get that. We'll get jobs. But we won't allow that to happen any more. We have heard it from people here. It's not even everybody from the community that is here. So I really encourage everybody to motivate more people to come out to the meeting tonight because this is a very serious thing we're speaking about here.

I really encourage the government to keep every First Nation involved updated on everything that's decided regarding this issue because we need to know. We don't want to hear things on the newspaper any more because we are the ones that live here every day. I think more people, they want to say things but they rely on us as the leaders to bring their concerns forward, too, so that's what I'm trying to do today. I really hope you guys don't allow this to happen because if you kill our water — you take that from us — you kill everybody in the community. That's what we need — our children, our elders — it's all they worry about, is when they're going to go get fresh water. We don't have very many elders left in the community. I speak on behalf of them, even the ones who are no longer here. Thank you.

**Chair:** Thank you very much. Does anybody else wish to address the Committee?

State your name for the record, please.

**Mr. Bolton:** I'm Ivan Bolton. I spoke here a few minutes ago. I've only got about a dozen words to say this time.

Water is the source of all life. Without water, this earth and anything on it cannot exist. It has to be drinkable water, and fracking will destroy it. Thank you.

**Chair:** Thank you, sir.

State your name for the record, please.

**Mr. Shorty:** [Kaska spoken. Text unavailable.]

My name is Rabbit's Nephew — that's in my language. As Dena people, that's who we are. We come from the water. That's part of us. The ground is part of us. The trees, the rocks — it's all part of us — it's the people who we are.

[Kaska spoken. Text unavailable.]

With fracking, you know, you pump poisoned water and all these chemicals. We say no to it. This is our land — your land. It's not only us; we are just taking care of it. We are stewards, like all the people said before me.

[Kaska spoken. Text unavailable.] That's what the elders told us — they said, "Don't sell your land; keep it. Keep it the way it is. Take care of it and take care of all the animals, not only for yourselves, but for the next generation — all the people." We listened to them. Now look at our land. It's kind of pristine — kind of. I could go into a mountain and find cans. That's what you call "progress"?

[Kaska spoken. Text unavailable.] We call it "progress" — it's all about money. The things that we make, Mother Earth can't absorb it; it just stays there — landfill. Now you ask us to invite fracking. No way. Destroy our water? You hear it over — you're still going to hear it over and over until it sinks in.

[Kaska spoken. Text unavailable.] These people — you get all the message from Facebook people, you know. They know about scientists. They don't know anything about what's out there.

[Kaska spoken. Text unavailable.] There's waters coming out of the ground all over our country. Our ancestors know that. It's pure water — you could drink it. You don't need to purify it with pills or put it through a chemical process to purify it. We still know where they are. We go there — that's what they said — we go to get our water from it.

[Kaska spoken. Text unavailable.] I get angry when people come in and just say this and that — [Kaska spoken. Text unavailable.] money — they talk about money.

[Kaska spoken. Text unavailable.] That's who we are as people — Mother Earth, my grandfather and my grandmother told me that — my dad and my mom — "Take care of it." That's the only planet we have. Dig a hole. [Kaska spoken. Text unavailable.] They put a cork on it and they say it's all right. To Mother Earth, that's what it is — to the whole universe, it's just a cork. The water comes out somewhere. We're speaking these thoughts because our ancestors told us this.

[Kaska spoken. Text unavailable.] I am speaking from my heart for my ancestors. Listen — listen careful to what we have to say. We're not just talking — [Kaska spoken. Text unavailable.] — we don't talk for nothing.

[Kaska spoken. Text unavailable.] If you listen good and understand, it will be good for all of us.

[Kaska spoken. Text unavailable.] I speak my language. It feels good, because I am from here and it is my language. [Kaska spoken. Text unavailable.] My people are from Mother Earth. So are you. That's what I said — I'm translating. [Kaska spoken. Text unavailable.]

If we destroy Mother Earth, we're going to go. We can't just jump to another planet. We're here. We're stuck. Like echedle said, "Let's wait and see. Let's work." [Kaska spoken. Text unavailable.] Maybe — maybe if they come up with something that won't destroy Mother Earth any more, then we'll look at it.

[Kaska spoken. Text unavailable.] This is our land. Look at it. [Kaska spoken. Text unavailable.] If you try to stop and listen — listen to Mother Earth, listen to everything — then we see where we're coming from. [Kaska spoken. Text unavailable.] I never find that from Facebook or a computer. It's there in front of us. Our ancestors told us that.

[Kaska spoken. Text unavailable.] Our ancestors seen it a long time ago and they said things going to be bad, bad things coming. They were listening. That's why we never signed land claims. That's why we've never gave up hope on our land. We're from here. We're passionate about our land, our animals, the air, the water we breathe. You should be too because we share it. Come, we share it. Let's work together, not against each other. [Kaska spoken. Text unavailable.] Thank you.

**Chair:** Thank you very much.

State your name for the record, please.

**Ms. Morin:** Thank you very much. My name is Irene Morin. I know I spoke earlier, but there was something here and I'd like to ask Ivan a question. When did you work at that place where — that oil field? When was it?

**Unidentified speaker:** (inaudible)

**Ms. Morin:** So about 40 years ago. More than that? 60 years ago? So about 60 years ago, there was this accident where he worked. Sixty years later, we're doing — okay, "On May 6, 2013, the Yukon Legislative Assembly adopted Motion No. 433, thereby establishing the Select Committee Regarding the Risks and Benefits of Hydraulic Fracturing." Sixty years later, we're still analyzing the risks and the benefits of this stuff?

You know, where I come from, or in my family, we depend a lot on common sense. Where is the common sense in this, when we really think about it? Where's the common sense in this stuff? We're all born with common sense to help us make decisions, the common sense of making the best we can do every day we're given.

I really don't understand why there should even be a question, why there should even be a committee to analyze this, to bring back information to the government for them to make a decision. I don't even know why there should be such a thing.

There were over 70 hours in meetings just to see if this makes sense? Let's think about it. Where is the common sense in that? Why are we even here to discuss this, to even talk about this? Common sense is ours, unless somebody's common sense is not there. But the government is going to make a final decision. Where is the common sense in the government? You know, we have to think about that.

**Chair:** Thank you very much.

Please state your name.

**Mr. Morin:** John Morin. What I was going to add is that all my life — I've worked since I'm 15 years old, because I'm from a family of 18 kids. They made us — the government made us pay into stuff like compensation boards and all different things like that which would take care of us in case of injuries and any kind of things like that. Since 20 years old, I kept on breaking my back and always play games with me without paying, because I was too young, making too big of an income, they didn't want to pay — kept giving me excuses.

Now today, what I see is when you hear the government making promises or big companies making promises — that if we do this, you do that, you do this, you do that, you're going to get this and that and that — they're waving carrots in front of us, pretending that they're giving us a gold mine. They're giving us something that's going to change our life to something special.

If we were to take our own little kids or grandkids and the government came to me and said, "I'm going to give you this much money for your kids or for your grandkids to make sure that they'll live comfortably forever if you are willing to let us risk their life," no matter how big the risk, do you think there is any of us that would lift our hand up and say, "I accept that money" if it risked our kids or grandkids? I guarantee you one thing: I don't care the amount of money, I would say no. I will not risk my kids' life or my grandkids'.

I do not believe in promises that the government makes, because there is too many promises that is being made, even before an election. Whoever gets elected is going to give us the world, and after they're elected, most of it seems to fall into the water. You don't hear about it. It's not delivered. So as far as I'm concerned, being a pure New Brunswick Frenchman, I'm going to say it's a bunch of crap. I don't believe in promises that have got a history of not being answered.

These people in this town over here, I live with them for four years now. As far as I'm concerned, it's my family. I left my grandkids behind to come and work here as a missionary. I go on vacation — everybody in town knows how much I love kids. I left my kids here and when I go on vacation, I'm there for a week — and my vacation is two weeks over there, or three — and I can't wait to come back over here, because this is where I want to be. This is where I want to die — with these people, because they are now my family.

They keep on saying no to fracking and the carrot keeps on getting waved with even bigger promises or whatever else. How many lures or how many traps is there going to be between big companies and the government before they realize that the people of this Yukon Territory said no? When does no mean no? Do we have to look like the white people are going to keep taking advantage of the native people? Do we have to be like a so-called lawyer that's called a blood-sucker because it seems like they take everything whenever they win a suit for you? They keep 30 or 40 percent of whatever they earn.

If the government did not have a big pile of money to be made with this or if the big companies did not have a big pile

of money, I do not believe that they would be offering this town or the native people — I do not think that they would offer them a big pile of money. The only reason it's being offered is because there is big — much, much, much bigger for their pocket — at any kind of risk.

I'm no lawyer, and I'm not that smart, but I'm not that dumb, neither. There's a trap behind this, and I don't believe that the people knows about it. The only way that they're going to find out about it is if the government breaks in and they start this kind of thing, we're going to find out when our kids die or get some disease of some type and then we're going to cry for it. I will cry for it because I don't want to lose any friends. I don't want to lose my family.

You guys are part of the government, and I'm not accusing you. Okay? So if I am passing — you think I am passing judgment on you guys, I am not. There's much higher than you within the government.

Be considerate to these people. No means no. It's not war time. We don't need to back to where the white fights the native. Instead of that, let's love what the people are trying to cherish, what they're trying to save and leave them alone. There shouldn't be another meeting of this. These meeting should be over. It should be Yukon said no, it's no. Respect them and that way maybe we can start respecting the government too so they don't break their treaty when they say you're going to do this and that and that and they don't deliver. They take a little more each time.

That's my point: leave them alone. Be godly. Thank you.

**Chair:** Does any other person — please.

State your name for the record, please.

**Mr. Williams:** Hi, my name is Bruce Williams. I feel way better now that the prayer has been said. Thank you, Doris. I'm so happy today that my brothers and sisters are behind me here today and I'm so proud of you all for standing up and speaking your truth from your heart for the old people of this land. It makes me feel really good. Something nobody mentioned today is Faro. We heard this — the ones above — bless them — heard this years ago. Oh, this is the best mining equipment. It's this and that. They spent — the government has spent millions and millions and hundreds of millions of dollars on that tailing pit. Now the moose have cancer. They're sick. It's done and they can't even clean it up.

Then they haul toxic waste out here and not even — there's waste in the garbage dump that was just hauled out here two weeks ago. Not even asked — they just came with B-trains from somewhere and hauled it and dumped here. The person cleaning it — I just asked him the other day. I was really worried about him. He says, "Yeah, I had the door of the machine closed and everything and I was feeling nauseous and everything," — he could smell it. You can smell the dump now when you go up there — without even asking. Nobody asked. They just come always. Why is that?

When I'm taught as a little boy, am I an enabler in this situation? So I know we aren't supposed to ask questions, but do we look at that? If you look at yourself — am I enabling

this situation? When you do that, are you enabling a situation that feels good to your heart, to your soul? Are you really?

Somebody was asking — James was asking — have you looked at these videos? I'm sure you've looked at these videos. I am sure everyone in this room has looked at these fracking videos. My prayer is that you go back and say to your committees, we aren't enablers in this situation. The people of Ross River are the true spirits and stewards of this land, from the old ones above — they've been here since time immemorial.

One of the reasons I really love the old people of this land — you know, before European contact came, there was aiee and Suguya. That is God and Jesus Christ — before they knew all about it — the Kaska people — hundreds and hundreds of years ago. They are here as spirits of this land, and like Verna says, her dad came from Old Crow to be here. John said to listen to this nation. Listen to our brothers and sisters. Listen to our chief. No is no, period. We don't want another Faro here. We don't want any of this bestowed upon what we call God's country. Over the river is really — and the North Canol — is God's country — real God's country. We don't need it here. What we really need is like everybody said — we need food, and the water is number one. It's sacred. Kaska people are the people of the water.

So it's even surprising to me that this happened today. Nobody — has anybody done their homework here? I don't think so. Like I said earlier — didn't even do homework for that opening prayer. I hope and pray that you people go home and really think with your hearts and souls what you are doing in this Committee and speak your truth from your heart without thinking of your positions or whatever — think of you and your families — what you are doing here today. Thank you. [*Kaska spoken. Text unavailable.*]

**Chair:** Thank you.

Does any other member of the public wish to address the Committee?

If no other person wants — Chief Ladue, please.

**Mr. Ladue:** I just want to say something in closing. I just want to say [*Kaska spoken. Text unavailable.*] to everyone who spoke from the heart today. Thank you. You know, there's a lot riding on this. It's not — this has implications that are beyond us. We've got to think about our kids and our kids' kids here, you guys. This here —

**Unidentified speaker:** (inaudible)

**Mr. Ladue:** Yeah, exactly. So you've heard it loud and clear from Ross River — from the chief, the council: no means no. You know, you guys should go back to the government and also recommend that they start looking at other ways of bringing money into the economy here. Like councillor James Dick said, we have pristine land here. It's beautiful. Let's look at adventure tourism, cultural tourism. That's a huge industry in B.C. Why not do the same here? Instead of looking at really harmful ways of making money that's through extraction of minerals and gas and trees, let's look at alternatives here, you guys. I can honestly say — maybe I shouldn't say this — but if there's a change in

government, the next leaders make the right choices here. Start working with our people, otherwise there's going to be nothing but litigation. This is what's going to happen here if fracking goes ahead — big time. Okay? That's all I'd like to say. *[Kaska spoken. Text unavailable.]*

**Chair:** I want to thank you all for coming and speaking with us today. We appreciate your time and your thoughts. Thank you very much.

*The Committee adjourned at 3:06 p.m.*