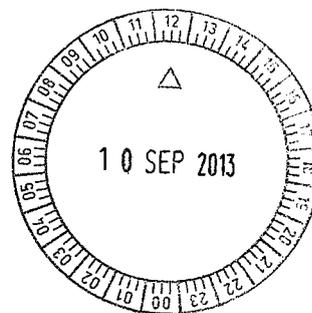


Mrs Audrey Neale



9 September 2013

ATTENTION MS MARGARET LIVERIS

State Legislative Council of Western Australia
Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs
Parliament House
GPO BOX A11
Perth
WA 6837

Dear Sirs

ENQUIRY INTO HYDRAULIC FRACTURING

Hydraulic Fracturing or “Fracking” as I understand, is the technique whereby water, sand and chemicals are used under pressure, to fracture rocks to extract oil and gas.

I have no interest as perhaps, pastoralists or anyone else who have land rights and any others. My concern is to ensure that the status quo is maintained to our environment and to sustain and preserve it for generations to follow. If land and what lies beneath is for purely monetary benefit for only sections of the public, at the expense of everyone else, this is entirely self-interest and something from which we should shy away.

During the course of this process, millions of litres of water is used in combination with sand and chemicals. After it has achieved the desired result, how is this polluted slurry disposed of? Is it piped into tankers and dumped elsewhere or discharged into the ocean, or will the fuel companies “clean” the water first? During the process, leaching is likely to occur into our water supply or allowed to remain, thus resulting in degradation of the soil.

Living around these oil or gas wells, residents will be affected by pollution of one kind or another. For instance, air, degradation of the land, water supply to name a few. Bill Marmion, Minister of Mines (Sunday Times 8/9/13 p.15) is trying to prove that water from “fracking” is safe, by drinking a glass. How magnanimous of him. The challenge for him is to do this on a long-term basis before he makes this comment. Health issues have already emerged with people who live within the vicinity of these oil/gas wells.

I realize that there are thousands of such wells in the United States of America. This does not necessarily mean that this makes it acceptable. However, one cannot help but wonder how strident their authorities are in researching the effects, harmful or otherwise,

of using this method of extraction techniques in order to secure financial gain, with little concern for their people.

Before hydraulic fracturing was started in W A Australia in 1958, how much, if any, research was carried out at the time? Was there research to study the effects of using this method, on people, agriculture, flora and fauna and where damage is irreversible? The obscene use of water (a commodity of which W A in particular, can ill afford), is yet another cogent reason for not allowing “fracking”

While there is a plethora of research, which may support the use of “fracking”, there are many more, which do not. The pollution is not only on the surface, it is below ground as already alluded to earlier. It finds its way into domestic water supplies and what flows from the tap may not be just water but gas as well, which is highly combustible. How safe is the water then?

As an analogy, consider the disaster of Fukushima, Japan, where water from the nuclear plant is radioactive and this is flowing around the affected areas and into the sea. The knock-on effect of this, is now affecting the ocean and most likely ocean-life. Whilst the questionable cocktail of slurry from “fracking”, may not be shown to be radioactive, how it affects humans, vegetation, animals, agriculture is something with which we should not be gambling, where it is likely to cause long-term harm to life as we know it.

We are not the only ones in WA expressing our grave concerns. There are many others not only in Australia but in U K, Europe, Canada and the U S. It is rather a question of what are governments doing to ensure our well-being? Are they simply turning a blind eye or deaf ear?

By engaging in these activities, is surely not the way to protect people and our planet. I appeal to you to thoroughly investigate and consider these issues and let your consciences dictate any outcome.

Yours faithfully

Audrey Neale