

Environment and Public Affairs Committee

From: Dean Leggo
Sent: Friday, 20 September 2013 1:31 PM
To: Environment and Public Affairs Committee
Subject: Inquiry into the Implications for Western Australia of Hydraulic Fracturing for Unconventional Gas

Dear Ms Margaret Liveris,

Public submission for the Inquiry into the Implications for Western Australia of Hydraulic Fracturing for Unconventional Gas.

Mining is a great WA industry and they have safeguards in place to deal with rehabilitation, but the unconventional gas industry does not. A correctly managed mine will not leave any major risks for the next 100 years because minerals do not move and water flow through the rock is well known. Once the hydraulic fracturing process disturbs the gas and a large number of pipes and holes are punched through the rock, the gas underground acts like a liquid and is never in a steady state. It is always moving and is extremely corrosive. The gas and liquid will move up through the cracks created by the fracturing process and faults present from Western Australia's past will cause many problems. Western Australia's geology is billions of years old and during that time, trillions of faults of all sizes and shapes have formed from the Earth's violent past. The unconventional gas industry wants to drill thousands and even hundreds of thousands of wells through his old, dry, cracked land we call home. There is no doubt that gas and corrosive liquid will make its way up through the multiple layers of rock over the years. It will get into our water table and even make it to the surface. This will not happen over a hundred years but over a decade or two.

How will this be controlled and monitored over the next decade and the next 100 years? Who will pay and do it?

However, this is not the intermediate problem. All pipes will corrode over time, but having the gas, corrosive hydraulic fracturing liquid and water this will occur in a few short years. Once the steel is compromised, the concrete will go in a flash, leaving dozens of holes in a single pipe to leak toxic liquid into all leaves of the ground and rock. The gas and liquid will quickly containment the land within a kilometre. This may be managed for a handful of wells but hundred thousand wells, a kilometre or two apart, whole landscapes will become unusable for drinking or agriculture.

The current technology cannot support this new process. There are too many unknowns to expose our communities to unconventional gas. We understand mining, all the life-time issues and the geology. Conventional gas can be managed but unconventional gas and the violent process to access this is completely new and changes everything. I recommend a moratorium on all activity and research put into place to understand the geology, fluid dynamics, well case technology, gas field analysis and life-time impacts, just to name a few. I do not think the current laws and understanding is at a level sufficient to make the reclamation and rehabilitation of the land adequate for the immediate, mid-term and or even long-term safety of our environment.

Regards,

Dean Benjamin Leggo