

Environment and Public Affairs Committee

From: Dan Clarke
Sent: Thursday, 19 September 2013 8:43 PM
To: Environment and Public Affairs Committee
Subject: Submission for Fracking Inquiry,

To whom it may concern,

It is my understanding that on 7 August 2013, the Committee resolved to inquire into and report on the implications for Western Australia of hydraulic fracturing (called fracking from now on in this submission) for unconventional gas.

I would like to add my submission to this inquiry.

I would like to receive a copy of the report when it is written.

My first point is that the terms of reference are quite limited and specific and I would urge a broadening of the terms of reference to include things like:

- the possible impact that fracking may have on water under the ground,
- the possible impact of any contamination to the aquifers in WA
- how fracking may impact water usage
- the possible impact of fracking on health and wellbeing of humans, animals and plants
- case studies of other places (Qld, SA, USA) in which fracking has taken place and a risk analysis based on these experiences

I would like to make the following points in relation to the specific terms of reference

how hydraulic fracturing may impact on current and future uses of land

I believe that fracking destroys, limits and damages the land. The process of fracking purposely destroys the structural integrity of the subterranean levels of the earth. It is not possible to mitigate the damage of this purposeful damage. It is not possible to reclaim what is destroyed. History is littered with examples of human waste and destruction of things which were thought worthless or unimportant at the time. Just because the shale rock under the ground doesn't appear to have value or importance at the moment, does not give authority for this generation to permanently destroy it for all time. This is not something like cutting down a forest which may in time regrow, fracking produces permanent, irreparable damage. For this reason alone, we must make fracking illegal.

Fracking also destroys or severely limits the current usage of land. Much of WA is agricultural land. The fracking wells and associated pipes, roads and other infrastructure will severely disturb the use of land. Should any leakage of contaminated water occur then the current use of land will be severely limited if not permanently damaged.

the regulation of chemicals used in the hydraulic fracturing process

Any chemical which is not able to be drunk, should not be allowed to be pumped down past the aquifer containing water which we rely on to drink.

All chemicals used and their quantities must be on public record. Mining companies must allow independent bodies to carry out regular, inspections at any time to measure for chemical contamination.

the use of ground water in the hydraulic fracturing process and the potential for recycling of produced water

The huge quantities of water used in the fracking process will mean less water for growing food, for drinking and for the environment. I don't believe we should be allowing any companies to take this much water. Any mining company must produce the fresh water (desalination) and not take water from existing supplies.

the reclamation (rehabilitation) of land that has been hydraulically fractured

Once ground has been fractured, it cannot be rehabilitated. It cannot be 'put back'. Once the land is scarred with roadways, pipes etc it cannot be returned. Once land prices have been devalued forcing homes to be sold the damage to families cannot be repaired.

Once an aquifer is contaminated it can never be restored. The long term impacts are simply too large. The scale of contamination and the pervasive nature of fracking means that rehabilitation will not be possible.

Any company who wants to mine must be held accountable to restore the area back to the condition they found it. (with fracking I do not believe this is possible). If the company does not do this then the authority given the mining licensee must be held responsible and must clean up the area.

In short.

I do not believe we should allow fracking to take place in Western Australia. I believe the dangers are too great. I believe the aquifers are too important to risk.

Fracking should be banned in Western Australia.

Thank you for reading my submission

Dan Clarke