

December 12, 2012

Elizabeth Young  
Environmental Assessment Officer  
Fifth Floor, TD Place, 140 Water St,  
St. John's NL A1C 6H6

Dear Ms. Young,

As a resident and business person living in the heart of Gros Morne National Park, Newfoundland, I am writing to express my deep concerns about proposed oil and gas exploration and development on the west coast, including but not limited to, the controversial practice of hydraulic fracturing. My understanding is that such activities could have a direct and long-term destructive impact on the environment, quality of life and livelihoods of residents in our communities. My European ancestors lived off the abundant marine resources of the west coast and Northern Peninsula for over 200 years, my Mi'kmaq ancestors in perpetuity, and I feel a deep sense of responsibility to speak for all those who have come before, and those who will come after me.

The fishing industry continues to represent a significant livelihood for many in this area and protecting our marine biodiversity is essential for reasons that should not require justification. The Gulf of St. Lawrence and Strait of Belle Isle are home to more than 2000 species of fish and birds, some of which are of special conservation concern or endangered. Hydraulic drilling and the toxic chemicals used in 'fracking' would disrupt at the least, and in the worst event of leaks, spills or other accidents, destroy the habitats and migration patterns of commercial fish species as well as other species that depend on them such as whales, dolphins and seals.

Many local people, such as myself, are committed to developing sustainable livelihoods in the tourism sector. Tourists are drawn here because of the spectacular and pristine natural environment. UNESCO and National Parks of Canada have recognized this area to have *universal value worthy of protection and preservation* as World Heritage Sites. Last year my business attracted people from as far as South America who made the effort to come here because of the unspoiled coastal habitats and marine life. I believe the presence of gas and oil exploration activities, such as drilling and pump equipment, trucks transporting polluting wastes, would be a strong deterrent to prospective tourists selecting a destination, as it would for me.

The research I have read (references attached) indicates that activities associated with oil and gas development have minimal and questionable benefit for local people in terms of jobs or quality of life. In fact quality of life is compromised by the associated risks to the health of humans, animals, plants and environments. Spills and leaks resulting from extraction and transportation of toxic chemicals, earthquakes and resulting tsunamis that can be caused by fracking, all of which pose real potential risk here in this area, would cause devastating and permanent damage to our coastal communities and wildlife. In the absence of direct benefits, I feel such wide-ranging risks do not justify even the small possibility of their occurrence.

We can no longer take for granted that our water and land will last forever and continue to sustain us without due diligence and stewardship. I thank you for your attention and appreciate your consideration of these local issues that have global implications because they affect each of us now, and even more so, the generations to come.

Sincerely,  
Alison Normore, Ph.D

Alison Normore, Ph.D, [REDACTED]

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