

From:

GRAHAM MCPHERSON

FRACKINGINQUIRY

"ONCE THE GENIE IS OUT OF THE BOTTLE WE CANNOT PUT IT BACK IN"

I HAVE VIEWED A NUMBER OF DOCUMENTARIES, SUCH AS GASLAND AND RESEARCHED THE FRACKING ISSUE.

PLEASED FIND ATTACHED TWO CREDIBLE JOURNALIST ARTICLES ON THE SUBJECT THAT CLEARLY PRESENTS SERIOUS ISSUES CONCERNING EXCESSIVE WATER USE, INCREASING DROUGHT ISSUES, WATER CHEMICAL INTOXICATION, EARTHQUAKE, AND SOIL CHEMICAL INTOXICATION RISK ISSUES.

WA CANNOT AFFORD TO APPROVE FRACKING THAT USES EXCESSIVE WATER USE GIVEN THE DRAMATICALLY REDUCED RAINFALL IN THE LAST 2 DECADES THAT HAS REQUIRED DEVELOPMENT OF COSTLY 2-3 DESALINATION PLANTS AND PLANNED USE OF RECYCLING OF SEWAGE WASTE WATER.

IT WOULD BE QUITE UNWISE FOR FRACKING TO BE APPROVED NEAR ANY WA AREAS THAT HAVE CONFIRMED SCIENTIFIC HISTORY AND RISKS OF EARTHQUAKES.

UNDER GROUND WATER CHEMICAL INTOXICATION AND SOIL CHEMICAL INTOXICATION FROM FRACKING ARE ALSO UNACCEPTABLE REAL RISKS NEAR RESIDENTIAL, FARMING AND AGRICULTURAL PROPERTIES.

THE CRUCIAL MATTER IS, ONCE LAND AREAS WATER SOURCES AND SOILS ARE CHEMICALLY INTOXICATED THEY CANNOT BE REALLY REHABILITATED. COMPANIES ALSO HAVE GENERATIONS OF HISTORY THAT DOCUMENTARIES HAVE REVEALED COMMUNITIES AND GOVERNMENTS HAVE BEEN LEFT WITH THE ISSUES OF INTOXICATED LANDS AND WATER RESOURCES. COMPANIES JUST CLOSE DOWN AND DECLARE BANKRUPTCY.

IF THE WA GOVT PROVIDES BROAD OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMPANIES TO DEVELOP FRACKING, THIS WILL DIVERT THEIR INTERESTS. INVESTMENTS AND DEVELOPMENT OF NON INTOXICATING, CLEAN RENEWABLE ENERGY RESOURCES.

LOOKING FORWARD TO THE INQUIRY OUTCOMES THAT SUPPORT THE HEALTH OF WA PEOPLE AND OUR LAND, WATER RESOURCES AS RENEWABLE ENERGY RESOURCES NEED TO BE THE SUBSTANTIAL FOCUS OF GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE SECTOR ENERGY

DEVELOPMENT.

MR GRAHAM MCPHERSON

ADVOCATE FOR OVER 35 YEARS

What's the truth about fracking? PATRICK BARKHAM THE GUARDIAN 18/4/2012

The Oscar-nominated USA documentary *Gasland*, which exposed widespread pollution in fracking hotspots such as Pennsylvania horror stories of fracking polluting the aquifers that hold drinking water were dramatically trumped in the UK last spring when one of the first shale gas fracking operations on British soil was halted after it triggered two earthquakes close to Blackpool. The fracking at Preese Hall, a well the size of a football pitch by the Blackpool North railway line, caused tremors measuring 2.3 and 1.5 on the Richter scale. Gayzer Tarjanyi, who lives near Blackpool, noticed the next day, fresh cracks in his home's gable end. His internal doors no longer shut properly: "The property has been moved about a bit," he says.

A new study by the US Geological Survey says a six-fold increase in small earthquakes in mid-America may be linked to oil and gas production, including fracking, since the end of the last century.

The Bowland Basin in Lancashire, where energy exploration company Cuadrilla has six drill sites.

Shale gas could be big business and in Lancashire there is already a strong sense of the little guy not being listened to. At one Cuadrilla site, Hesketh Bank, planning permission for the temporary drilling rig was granted by Lancashire county council and a notice was stuck on a private track far from the main road. "It was so sneaky the way they did it," says Stopforth. "We feel a lot of this has been done in the dark," says Christine Dickinson, a fifth-generation farmer who runs an organic farm and caravan site by the Hesketh Bank well. Cuadrilla knows it must redouble its efforts to placate sceptical local communities. In Sussex earlier this year, its representatives were trounced by furious locals at a heated public meeting. So it has cleverly replaced potentially hostile group meetings with drop-ins at village halls, where friendly staff collar locals one-by-one.

Ian Roberts resident says, he is sceptical about Cuadrilla's information evenings. "It's just PR. It's 'we have consulted the local community', tick the box."

Despite the polarised debate, it is unarguable that the scientific understanding of the risks of fracking in the UK is incomplete.

A report by the US government's Environment Protection Agency (EPA) will negate his study's findings of no adverse environmental consequences unique to fracking – if the EPA's findings are confirmed by peer review. The EPA constructed two deep monitoring wells to sample aquifer water, which confirmed the presence of compounds from fracking and found that drinking water wells were "below established health and safety standards".

Most of the concern has been over water pollution but a three-year study by the Colorado School of Public Health, published this year, found a number of potentially toxic petroleum hydrocarbons in the air near fracking sites in western Colorado. These included benzene (a known carcinogen), ethylbenzene, toluene and xylene. Effects, the study concluded, could include eye irritation, headaches, sore throats and difficulty breathing. "We also calculated higher cancer risks for residents living nearer to the wells as compared to those residing further [away]," the report said.

Who monitors possible air pollution from fracking in Britain? Fracking is currently controlled by a regulatory patchwork: local authorities supposedly check air quality, the Health and Safety Executive inspects well construction and the Environment Agency (EA) assesses any impact on water supplies. The EA can also monitor air pollution and use existing regulation to halt fracking if there is a pollution risk. It also regulates the removal of the polluted fracking backwash, another source of anxiety for local people given that this radioactive water is removed by road tankers – past villages and schools – before being placed in storage.

Is the current regulation inadequate for a fully fledged fracking industry? "Not necessarily," says Tony Grayling, head of climate change at the EA, who believes the regulatory system in the UK is "significantly more robust" than in the US. Grayling admits that the EA is still learning about fracking and doesn't yet possess "the information we need to give technical guidance to our staff to apply the powers we have in the right way". For instance, he says that EA staff do not yet know exactly what is the safe distance required between a fracking well and groundwater supplies.

Given the scientific evidence, are the Stopforths reassured? "No, I'm not reassured," says Doreen. "We've already had an earthquake in Blackpool, just over the water. You tell me when they have an earthquake, what are we opening up? The fracking, how do they know what they will disturb? What about my little grandson? What about future generations? To leave behind a mess like this for the next generation just to go for the last little bit of fossil fuel energy is just wrong."

Cons of Fracking Lindsey Andrews January 8, 2018 GREENHANDGROWING.ORG

Although there are some wonderful things about fracking, there have been found to be a few negatives. These cons include less focus on renewable energy, increased droughts, polluted water, noise pollution, and the possible triggering of earthquakes, and an increase in toxin releases.

Less Focus on Renewable Energy

When scientists were finding that we might be running out of oil and gas soon, there was a huge influence to find a renewable energy. Science was finding ways for vehicles to be driven with clean energy, solar energy, wind energy, and hydro energy was beginning to take off as well. Fracking has lengthened the amount of time we have to rely on such resources. This is great in itself, but now fracking is distracting from the research of alternative and cleaner energy sources. Sadly, we have pushed finding a cleaner energy to the back burner. It is still unknown what we will do when the gas and oil sources run out. Although this might not impact the generation of today, it should still be a concern for our future generations.

Increased Droughts

Drought

Fracking requires vast amounts of water to break through the rock beneath the surface, for example, each fracturing job typically requires between 1 and 8 million gallons of water to complete. With a vast majority of the United States experiencing drought, this brings some bad news. This poses a problem especially when fracking is considered more important than people who need water to live. Naturally, locals began having issues with fracking in their neighborhoods when they discovered that most of the water in their towns were being used to locate gas that was not entirely needed.

Polluted Water

Precaution is taken to ensure that drinking water remains untouched by fracking, but last April confirmed that high-volume hydraulic fracturing could contaminate drinking water. There have been many citizens across the country that have complained of fouled tap water. There have even been reports of tap water that comes out of the tap bubbly and flammable from methane increases. Wells have blown out and are completely hazardous to the environment. Since it is unknown what the companies are putting in the blast mixture, it is concerning as to what happens to those exposed to it. There have even been situations where companies have cut corners, creating unsafe sites and working environments. These cut corners lead to dangers of wells blowing out and leaking lots of chemicals and hazards into the water systems.

Noise Pollution

Along with an increase in water pollution, fracking has grown noise pollution quite a bit. Fracking is a very loud process and continues for extended periods of time. For people that are living close to the fracking location, the noise can become extremely annoying and even cause problems with their function. Fracking aside, the noise of the equipment and vehicles is enough to drive anyone crazy. Light pollution is also a problem. Since fracking continues, regardless of the time of day, lights will be brought in to keep the process going. These lights can be extremely annoying to those that are living close by. The combination of the noise and the light can disturb local lives and the lives of numerous animals living around the area.

Earthquakes

Since water is being used to blast rocks apart under the surface of the earth, scientists believe that fracking creates earthquakes. In general, hydraulic fracturing is still relatively new. As a result, we are still learning about the effects it creates. Research is showing a steady increase in earthquakes yearly. Between 1967 and 2000, geologists observed about 21 earthquakes of 3.0 or greater in the central United States. Since the increase in fracking, geologists have noted that number rose to 100 earthquakes annually. There were 188 in 2011 alone.

Fracturing is linked to a number of earthquakes that took place around the United States and overseas. The most well known is that of Blackpool in early 2011. Many believe that local fracking caused minor seismic events that measured 2.3 and 1.5 on the Richter scale. Recent research is showing that seismology in Texas and Oklahoma are getting increasingly risky and unknown changes.

Increased Release of Toxins

Even though a large majority of the mixture used to blast the rocks underground is just water, there is a measure of chemical used. As of now, companies are not obligated to release what chemicals they are using. Since what companies are using is unknown, people that live close to fracking sights are unable to protect themselves from it. Scientists cannot even begin to predict what results will become of the chemicals used because the companies are the only ones that know what they are. It is even unknown as to the effects that the mixture has on the employees who are working around it every day.