

Fracking Across Canada

Yukon Community opposition to fracking was spurred by an application submitted by the Chinese company Northern Cross in 2010. There is currently no fracking underway in the Yukon, but Northern Cross has been conducting 3D seismic testing.

The Council of Yukon First Nations passed a resolution in July 2013 declaring traditional territories “frack-free.”

The Northwest Territories The Canol shale formation of the Sahtu area in the central Mackenzie Valley is believed to be one of the largest potential sources of oil shale on the continent, with estimates of between three and five billion barrels of recoverable oil. Oil and gas corporations Imperial Oil, Shell, ConocoPhillips, MGM Energy and Husky have invested \$628 million since 2011 to lease 15 parcels in the central Mackenzie region for exploration. In July 2013, it was announced that an additional 10 parcels of land would be made available for lease. There is also potential for fracking in the southwest NWT, in the Fort Liard region of the territory.

British Columbia British Columbia is home to what’s known as the world’s “largest frack,” with shale gas reserves in the Horn River, Montney, Liard and Cordova basins located in the province’s northeastern corner. There have been more than 1,062 wells fracked in B.C. In 2010, over the course of 111 days, a gigantic frack took place at Two Island Lake in the Horn River Basin, with an average of 17 fracks per well, which used 5.6 million barrels of water, 111 million pounds of sand and massive quantities of unknown chemicals.

Alberta The Alberta Energy regulator says that 171,000 wells have been fracked in Alberta since the 1950s. There are 15 prospective shale gas formations in the province and five of these formations (Duvernay, Muskwa, Basal Banff/Exshaw, North Nordegg, and the Wilrich) may contain up 1,291 trillion cubic feet (TcF) of shale gas. The province could contain an additional 500 TcF of coalbed methane (CBM). While CBM typically uses less fracking fluid than shale gas, the wells are not as deep, so fracking happens closer to the surface, heightening concerns about potential drinking water contamination.

Saskatchewan Fracking in Saskatchewan is almost exclusively for the extraction of the province’s oil reserves. Most fracking is concentrated in the Bakken oil play, which straddles the Canada-U.S. border. The area is estimated to hold 200-300 billion barrels of oil, with potentially 1.3 billion barrels in Saskatchewan alone.



Manitoba Fracking for oil is confined to a small corner in southwestern Manitoba. Since 2006, a total of 1,978 horizontal wells have been drilled. However, there is little public information on the chemicals and the amount of water used in the fracking process. The Manitoba government is working on new regulations for the fracking industry and creating a “FracFocus” website where fracking companies can “volunteer” information about the chemicals and water they use.





Ontario While there is presently no fracking underway in Ontario, the Ontario Geological Survey (OGS) has highlighted the shale gas potential in the Ordovician Shale formations located in southern Ontario. The OGS drilled in 11 locations, including St. Joseph, Little Current, Warton, Bruce, Chatham, Port Stanley, Halton, Mount Forest, Imperial, Lincoln, Pickering and Russell.

Ontario borders four of the five Great Lakes. Developing these shale formations could have serious implications for the Lakes, Georgian Bay and local watersheds.

Quebec In May, 2013 Quebec's Environment Minister tabled Bill 37 which, if passed, would impose a moratorium on fracking in the Lowlands of the St. Lawrence River for up to five years. The proposed legislation would revoke all drilling licences and prohibit new ones. Bill 37 follows years of opposition to fracking in Quebec. In 2008 there was a burst of exploration activity in the St. Lawrence River Lowlands for the Utica shale formation, with 31 wells fracked. This sparked significant local opposition and prompted dozens of municipalities to pass resolutions banning fracking.

New Brunswick The provincial government is moving forward with fracking despite growing public opposition. Most gas resources in the province are trapped in shale formations. There are currently 49 fracked wells in the province.

People from across the Atlantic region have gathered in support of the Mi'kmaq in Elsipogtog as the community continues to block shale gas exploration by SWN Resources Canada.

Prince Edward Island The Department of Finance, Energy and Municipal Affairs governs fracking in the province. As of August 2013, there are no fracking operations underway, however, up to 40 per cent of the province could be exposed to fracking in the future. Some experts believe there is a potential of 7.6 Tcf of coalbed methane in the ground on P.E.I. Local residents have joined together to form a diverse coalition under the banner "Don't Frack PEI."

Newfoundland and Labrador Shoal Point Energy submitted a proposal to perform onshore-to-offshore fracking for oil exploration in several sites along the west coast of Newfoundland. Black Spruce Energy has since negotiated a farm-in agreement for exploration with Shoal Point. Public concern has focused on one location in particular – Rocky Harbour, which is fully encircled by Gros Morne National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Nova Scotia In early 2011, the Nova Scotia government announced it would be reviewing fracking. The review was extended in April 2012 for an additional two years.

In 2008 fracking occurred in the Kennetcook and Noel region in Hants County. Triangle Petroleum Resources had several permits that allowed fracking and water withdrawals from local rivers. The lack of information related to this project brought people together in the coalition known as NOFRAC.

Lake Ainslie, Nova Scotia's second largest freshwater lake, was also under threat from fracking operations. In September 2012, the Mi'kmaq Warriors Society and other Indigenous communities set up a partial blockade on the Canso Causeway to highlight the dangers of oil and gas drilling.