

Nova Scotia

In early 2011, the Nova Scotia government announced it would be reviewing hydraulic fracturing. The review process would determine “potential environmental impacts of hydraulic fracturing in onshore petroleum exploration.”¹³

The review was extended in April 2012 for an additional two years, in part to allow for other reviews to take place and for more information to be gathered. The provincial government would not consider or approve any new applications during the review period, which is expected to be complete in the summer of 2014.¹⁴

In August 2013, groups celebrated the Nova Scotia government’s announcement that it would cancel the current review of fracking and replace it with a more comprehensive and independent review that would include public consultations and an advisory panel of experts who would examine the social, economic, environmental and health impacts of fracking. Fracking has, in the past, been allowed in Nova Scotia. In 2007 in the Kennetcook and Noel regions in Hants County, Triangle Petroleum Resources was issued several fracking and water extraction permits. The lack of information related to this project, and concerns that other projects may be permitted, gave rise to the coalition known as “NOFRAC” (Nova Scotia Fracking Resource and Action Coalition). Through access to information requests, NOFRAC pieced together information about fracking in Hants County and documented it in their report,

13 www.gov.ns.ca/nse/pollutionprevention/consultation.hydraulic.fracturing.asp; novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20110404012

14 www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/story/2012/04/17/ns-fracking-decision-delay.html; novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20120416004



2012 Global Frackdown on Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia.

*Out of Control: Nova Scotia’s experience with fracking for shale gas.*¹⁵

In 2010, the local chapter of the Council of Canadians began to raise concerns about the potential for fracking near Lake Ainslie, Nova Scotia’s largest freshwater lake. PetroWorth Resources, now known as First Sahara Energy Inc., had been granted permission to drill an exploratory oil well beside the lake. Many individuals and groups joined the fight and the campaign “Protect Lake Ainslie” got underway. The Margaree Environmental Association appealed the Environment Minister’s decision to grant the exploration permit. Unfortunately, this appeal was dismissed. In September 2012, the Mi’kmaq Warriors Society and other Indigenous communities set up a partial blockade on the Canso Causeway to highlight their concerns with the dangers of fracking. The Council’s Inverness County Chapter continued to advocate for an anti-fracking bylaw and due to intense community pressure, Inverness County Council passed the first bylaw banning fracking in Canada in May 2013. PetroWorth never began drilling and the company’s lease expired on July 15, 2013.

Colchester County also waded into the fracking debate when Atlantic Industrial Services (AIS) applied for a permit to release what they claimed to be “treated” fracking wastewater into the County’s wastewater sewage system in Debert. AIS has been receiving fracking waste from projects in New Brunswick as well as the

15 nofrac.wordpress.com/nofrac-reports/issue-paper-2/

exploration wells in Nova Scotia. The fracking wastewater would have been released into the Chiganois River, impacting communities near Cobequid Bay and the Bay of Fundy. Colchester's Sewer Use Appeal Committee ultimately rejected the permit, stating that it was not the municipality's role "to allow the Bay of Fundy to be the petri dish for fracking wastewater." AIS still has at least 8.9 million litres of fracking wastewater from the Nova Scotia fracking operations alone.¹⁶ Windsor, Nova Scotia has accepted the same "treated" fracking waste, and allowed 7 million litres of fracking wastewater containing radioactive elements to be discharged through Windsor's sewage system that connects to the Minas Basin. There is another request on the table from AIS to treat and discharge more fracking wastewater.¹⁷

The Nova Scotia government must consult with the public about how to safely dispose of the existing fracking wastewater and implement a ban on fracking in the province so that no further fracking wastewater is produced.

Community opposition has played a major role in the efforts to protect communities from fracking in Lake Ainslie and Colchester County. Colchester County received 40 written submissions and heard multiple presentations during the public consultation process. Opposition is ramping up in Windsor now to stop the town from accepting fracking waste and discharging it in local waterways. In November 2013, the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities passed a resolution supporting a province-wide moratorium on hydraulic fracturing and highlighting the problem of fracking wastewater in Nova Scotia. The newly elected Liberal government has passed a law

16 www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/story/2013/05/17/ns-debert-decision.html; www.colchester.ca/committee-decision; halifax.mediacoop.ca/author/ken-summers

17 www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/story/2012/10/18/ns-windsor-fracking-water-concerns.html; halifax.mediacoop.ca/author/ken-summers

banning the importation of fracking waste and has committed to upholding the moratorium and conducting the independent review.

GROUPS WORKING ON FRACKING

Clean Water Windsor
www.facebook.com/cleanwaterwindsor

The Council of Canadians Inverness County, North Shore, and South Shore Chapters
www.canadians.org/fracking

EHFOG: East Hants Fracking Opposition Group
www.facebook.com/pages/East-Hants-Fracking-Opposition-Group/223464937793337

NOFRAC
nofrac.wordpress.com

No Fracking - Windsor Block Nova Scotia
www.facebook.com/NoFrackingWindsorBlockNovaScotia

Protect Lake Ainslie
www.facebook.com/protectlakeainslie

Save the Bay of Fundy
www.facebook.com/groups/171491989666644/

Sierra Club Atlantic
atlantic.sierraclub.ca

RESOURCES AND REGULATIONS

Nova Scotia Environment - Issues water approvals
www.gov.ns.ca/nse/resources/permits.asp#water_approvals

Nova Scotia Environment's hydraulic fracturing review
www.gov.ns.ca/nse/pollutionprevention/consultation.hydraulic.fracturing.asp

Inverness County's bylaw
www.canadians.org/sites/default/files/water/fracking/Anti-fracking_bylaw_passed_May6_2013.pdf