



Thomas Mulcair
New Democratic Party of Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

December 8, 2014

Dear Mr. Mulcair:

Canadian and Indigenous communities are increasingly demanding a ban on hydraulic fracturing. This risky practice poses one of the biggest threats to climate change, drinking water, public health and local democracy. I am writing to urge the New Democratic Party to stop fracking in Canada.

The Council of Canadian Academies (CCA) released its long-awaited report, *Environmental Impacts of Shale Gas Extraction in Canada*, in May warning that we lack the research on the safety of fracking chemicals, long-term impacts, well deterioration and impacts of leaks and fracking wastewater disposal. We currently do not have the scientific understanding to declare it safe.

Leading up to the Global Frackdown, an international day of action on October 11, the Council of Canadians released the results of an EKOS Research poll that found most people, regardless of political affiliation, support a fracking moratorium. Seventy percent of Canadians support “a national moratorium on fracking until it is scientifically proven to be safe.”

This support for a moratorium cuts across party lines. The highest support for a moratorium came from NDP voters: 87% of them support a national moratorium. 78% of Liberal voters and nearly half of Conservative voters support a moratorium. Currently, the Green Party is the only party calling for a national moratorium.

While the provinces issue water and drilling permits, the federal government has jurisdiction for regulating oil and gas activities on First Nation reserves, trade-secret exemptions for fracking chemicals, the release of contaminants to aquatic environments, Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) tanker safety and providing national leadership for the management of freshwater sources.

The CCA report pointed out that “shale gas development is occurring largely in the traditional territories of Aboriginal peoples who depend on the local environment for food and water and whose culture may be particularly affected.”

Communities in the Atlantic are exploring plans to treat fracking wastewater in municipal wastewater treatment plants which would discharge the waste in local rivers connected to the Bay of Fundy. This matter also falls under federal jurisdiction, as releasing contaminants to aquatic environments is regulated by the Fisheries Act. Environment Canada and Fisheries and Oceans’ should investigate and regulate these proposals.

With 18 proposals for LNG terminals along the coast of British Columbia, LNG tankers, which are classified as a Grade A hazard and the top level hazard, present a heightened risk to coastal communities. Transport Canada regulates marine transportation and safety under the Canada Shipping Act, and the Arctic Waters Pollution Protection Act.

In a letter to the Council of Canadians you wrote, “...the federal government has a critical role to play in responding to potential environmental concerns stemming from fracking. Recognizing that, in 2010 Parliament unanimously approved a NDP motion calling for an open, public review of relevant federal laws, regulations and policies regarding the development of all unconventional sources of oil and gas...New Democrats strongly support the mandatory disclosure of fracking fluid components. Even though industry is open to stricter disclosure requirements, the federal Conservatives are pursuing a voluntary approach, not mandatory chemical disclosure. Federal New Democrats have also advocated examining federal legislation like the Canada Water Act and the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, to ensure that the provisions that protect drinking water and water resources are adequate. Despite the gutting of critical environmental assessment legislation, we will continue to call on the federal government to thoroughly investigate the risks of shale gas fracking and take appropriate regulatory action to protect our environment.”

With the growing evidence that fracking poses too great a risk to climate, health and our lakes and rivers, communities everywhere are calling for a ban. As you know, in New Brunswick, shale gas was the key election issue this fall. Provinces such as Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick have listened to communities and placed moratoriums on the practice.

Council of Canadians supporters are demanding that federal party leaders take decisive action on curbing climate change, keep drinking water, safeguarding public health and protecting local democracy leading up to the federal election next year and beyond. I urge the New Democratic Party to step up and differentiate your party from others by committing to stop fracking in Canadian and Indigenous communities.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Emma Lui". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Emma Lui
National Water Campaigner
Council of Canadians