

Update on Hydraulic Fracturing Review

The hydraulic fracturing review committee continued to interview petroleum-producing jurisdictions in Canada and the United States. The information gathered during the interview process will supplement the work of external consultants that were engaged to review issues and regulations related to Nova Scotia's review of hydraulic fracturing. The consultant's report will inform the key findings of the committee's report and will be released as an appendix to the final report.

Provincial environmental experts from outside of the hydraulic fracturing review committee were engaged to review the preliminary analysis of potential environmental impacts. The areas examined included potential impacts to groundwater, surface water and land during various activities in the hydraulic fracturing process. This information will be considered by the committee and further work will be done before final validation of the initial environmental analysis.

The Province of Quebec announced that the committee studying hydraulic fracturing had been granted an extension for further study due to the complexity of the issues involved and is now not expected to be finished until sometime in 2013. The government has also accepted the committee's recommendation that no field testing of fracturing be authorized in Quebec and further studies of aspects of fracturing be restricted to laboratories. The committee will continue to visit petroleum producing jurisdictions and will hold some sector-based discussions to determine potential effects.

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced an expanded study into the potential effects of past petroleum exploration on groundwater at Pavillion, Wyoming. This follows an earlier EPA draft report that was released in December 2011. The EPA now recognizes that further sampling of the deep monitoring wells drilled for the Agency's groundwater study is important to clarify questions about the initial monitoring results before a peer review of the draft report can be completed. <http://yosemite.epa.gov/opa/admpress.nsf/d0cf6618525a9efb85257359003fb69d/17640d44f5be4cef852579bb006432de!opendocument>