

Eamonn Murtagh

From: Sinead McManus
Sent: 25 September 2011 23:00
To: Eamonn Murtagh
Subject: concerned about fracking

Dear Mr. Murtagh,

I am writing to you to voice my concern about the proposed onshore petroleum licences being granted to drill for gas in The Lough Allen Basin. As an Irish Citizen and a voter originally from Co.Cavan I would like to object to the proposal. I have an honours degree in Environmental Science and have studied water pollution and its effects in great detail. As part of my degree I sampled many of the lakes around counties Cavan, Leitrim and Sligo for water quality. I understand the work involved to keep Ireland's water quality to an acceptable European Standard. I have seen the effects that agricultural and industrial pollutants can have on water quality and the amount of work not to mention the enormous expense involved to return polluted lakes to a safe state.

We are lucky in Ireland to have clean fresh drinking water and a good supply of groundwater to supply our future water needs. I do not understand how this precious resource can be treated as something we can risk for natural gas using a method (fracking) that is not fully understood and comes with evidence of atrocious cases of water pollution. Can we risk our water table? The proposed licence covers an area of 8000 square kilometers or 1/10 of Ireland and is the source of the might River Shannon. I really think that the Government have to be crazy to think the risk is worth it. I mean if you look at the history of the companies involved would you really trust them to follow strict environmental standards? I think the problem lies in the fact that fracking as a method can not be controlled no matter how well you plan it, methane gas can escape during the process and leak into the water table. How can you stop a methane gas leak once it's started? We are not talking about an oil spill here which is very visible and traceable to its source but wrecks ecosystems before it is stopped. How do the Government propose to stop a methane gas leak?

It has already been banned in all of France and a move is underway to ban it in the state of New Jersey „French environment minister Nathalie Kosciusko-Morizet said

“I’m against hydraulic fracturing. We have seen the results in the U.S. There are risks for the water tables and these are risks we don’t want to take....“It was an error,” Kosciusko-Morizet said of the permits given last year. “These never should have been granted”.

I feel that the risks are far far far too great. We need to imagine the worse case scenario here. Lets say the ground water is polluted, children begin to get sick, people get worried, they stop using their home water supply, schools have to close, an inquiry is opened. People get angry, more people get sick, tourism numbers drop, millions of fish are floating dead on top of lakes in Cavan, Leitrim, Roscommon. The inland fishing industry is wiped out. County Council budgets can't cope with the extra expenses involved in testing drinking water. Do you remember the chaos in Galway during the ourbreak of Cryptosporidium? Can Ireland afford to risk its water supply? Obviously not. Do you think its appropriate for the citizens of Ireland who have suffered so much for the mistakes of previous Governments to have to deal with this at a time when we are barely able to afford to keep food on the table to pay mortgages. Honestly I think it is too much.

I want you to understand how strongly I feel about this . It is wrong on so many levels. It is a right of the citizens to have access to clean water. I want to live in a country who values its natural resources and understands when the risk is too great that you do not risk the health of children, plants and animals. I believe we should protect our ecosystems because without them we have nothing.

Please use your influence, do your research, and listen to the people, not the shareholders of a foreign company with a tarnished environmental record. I do not trust this company or the Government to regulate it in a safe manner because from the evidence from around the world it is not possible to do so, it is simply too risky.

Thank you for reading this.

Kind regards,

Sinead McManus