Separating Fact from Gas Industry Spin

In Febuary 2025, the Houston government lifted the hard-won ban on hydrolic fracturing (commonly known as fracking) in Nova Scotia.

Since then, they've been pushing hard to bring this risky, outdated industry to our province – despite heavy oposition from the public, experts and Mi'kmaw Rights Holders.

But what is fracking? The process involves injecting a high-pressure mixture of water, sand and chemicals into a drilled well. This creates fractures in rock formations so that methane gas can be extracted.

Industry and government officials have spoken at length about the supposed benefits of fracking. They say it will provide economic growth, will make us energy independent and can be done safely without risking the health of our water, communities and climate.

But are these claims fact, or just more hot air from the billionaire-backed fossil fuel industry?

This factsheet tackles some of the myths around fracking to help clear the air on what it would *actually* mean for Nova Scotia.

MYTH: *Fracking is safe now!*

FACT: Fracking uses thousands of harmful chemicals and several known carcinogens. Even with technological advances, true remediation is nearly impossible, and the process is still linked to environmental contamination, increased health impacts and greater risk of droughts and wildfires.

Adverse health outcomes associated with fracking include birth defects (including cardiovascular, neurological and gastrointestinal issues), respiratory issues, increased rates of leukaemia, kidney infections and urinary tract infections.

MYTH: *Fracking Research and Development is NOT invasive.*

FACT: When the government and industry say *research and development*, what they really mean is *exploratory drilling* – which is still just fracking. The risks don't disapear just because they call it something different.

And due to Nova Scotia's laws around landowner rights, gas corporations could be allowed to do exploratory drilling on private property without the landowner's consent.

MYTH: *Fracking won't impact water.*

FACT: Fracking and gas plants require a LOT of water. This threatens community water supply, which could increase the risk of drought as well as the cost of your water bills.

In B.C., fracking companies paid some of the lowest rates for water, all while polluting enough fresh water to supply the entire city of Nanaimo. Fracking also puts local wells at risk when chemicals and pollution from fracking sites leak into surrounding groundwater.

MYTH: *Gas is cheap. Renewables are too expensive.*

FACT: Gas prices are volatile and jump around a lot, as we're seeing right now.

Through those constant changes, the trend is always upwards - prices have been going up since 1992. This is expected to continue as this finite resource becomes scarcer.

On the other hand, the cheapest form of new energy is onshore wind, which has come down in price by 60 per cent from 2009-2023.

MYTH: *Local gas production will make us independent from the United States.*

FACT: The companies investing in gas extraction in the Atlantic region and across Canada are overwhelmingly U.S. owned.

New gas plants proposed in New Brunswick and P.E.I., the Ksi Lisams LNG facility on the west coast and many more are majority-backed by U.S. companies. These corporations have no ties to our communities – but many of them DO have ties to Donald Trump and massive private equity firms like Blackstone and Apollo Global Management.

In fact, roughly 77 per cent of the members of the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP) are majority U.S. owned companies.

This means that more profits from gas extraction will leave our communities and wind up in the pockets of wealthy oligarchs.

Less benefits for us, more money for U.S. billionaires.

MYTH: *Fracking companies pay for their own cleanup after they are done.*

FACT: Gas extraction companies are notorious for leaving abandoned wells behind for communities to deal with.

In Alberta, landowners have been fighting for years to have tens of thousands of wells cleaned up. There are more than 13,000 wells managed by the Orphaned Wells Association because companies have either gone bankrupt or just walked away without cleaning up their mess. When this happens, it's taxpayers who are left footing the bill and dealing with toxic contamination.

MYTH: *Gas is fast!*

FACT: Issues in the global supply chain have led to multi-year delays. An over-reliance on gas could lead to shortages with increasing production delays and continuing supply chain issues.

In short, as the world transitions to clean energy sources, by the time we get projects off the ground in Nova Scotia, it's possible that no one will want our gas.

MYTH: *A local gas industry will reduce energy costs for Nova Scotians.*

FACT: It is more profitable for corporations to export resources than sell them domestically.

There is no guarantee that Nova Scotia gas would be used domestically – and even if it is, volatile prices mean that cheaper energy is far from a sure thing, especially in the long term.

MYTH: *We can be a competitive global exporter of gas.*

FACT: The provincial government claims we have roughly 184 billion cubic meters of methane gas to be exploited. Since our own energy demands are too small and it is more profitable for corporations to export, Nova Scotia would need to seek outside buyers for our gas.

But we would be competing with other producers like Alberta, who produces 11.2 billion cubic feet of marketable gas per day. Even at the most optimistic estimates of our gas supply, we simply cannot compete with larger suppliers who produce more for less.

But we do have a leg up when it comes to wind energy. With our incredible wind energy potential, Nova Scotia could become a global leader in clean energy production.

MYTH: *Gas is an integral part of our energy grid.*

FACT: Gas power comprises only 12 per cent of Nova Scotia's total energy supply.

As fossil fuel phaseout continues, battery storage, investment in cheaper renewables like wind and solar, as well as smart grid planning and energy efficiency can all ensure an affordable, reliable and clean energy supply – without the need for dirty, polluting methane gas.

MYTH: *A gas industry will make Nova Scotia a "have" province.*

FACT: Someone will get rich off fracking, but it won't be everyday Nova Scotians.

Sable Island Offshore Gas only paid $1.9 billion in royalties over a period of 20 years. To put this in perspective, in Nova Scotia, tourism generates roughly $3.7 billion in domestic
revenue ANNUALLY.

In terms of jobs, Fuelling Canada states that the gas sector directly employs about 40,000 people in all of Canada. A transition to a clean energy economy could create nearly the same number of jobs here in Nova Scotia alone. These jobs would include electricians, carpenters, technicians, engineers, policy makers and many more.

For references and additional resources, see the full version of this factsheet at ecologyaction.ca/Keeping-theKnow-in-NS