



Ecology Action Centre

# What the **FRACK?!**

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Questions to  
Ask & Answers  
to Look Out For

# Separating Fact from Gas Industry Spin

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Since then, they've been pushing hard to bring this risky, outdated industry to our province – despite heavy oposition from the public, experts and Mi'kmaw Rights Holders.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

As government and industry continues to try and sell fracking to our communities, it's important to know what kinds of questions to ask and what kinds of answers to look out for.

**This factsheet will explore some key questions to ask government and industry spokespeople, and some examples of good and bad responses you may hear.**

Key Questions to Ask	Green Flag Responses	Red Flag Responses
<i>What does exploratory drilling entail?</i>	Exploratory drilling is a smaller version of the fracking process to determine available gas deposits.	It is a <b>non-invasive analysis</b> of bedrock to determine what gas deposits are available.
<i>Is fracking safe now?</i>	Fracking still poses environmental and health concerns. It has recently contributed to wildfires and droughts and can result in birth defects and cancers.	New fracking practices have <b>mitigated the risks</b> , and several countries <b>conduct fracking safely</b> .
<i>How much water will be used, where is it coming from?</i>	We are projecting <b>[specific number]</b> of liters annually based on projected energy demand and usage as well as <b>[specific number]</b> of liters as water removal.	<b>Minimal water usage</b> is required we are in talks with a <b>community</b> to utilize their <b>water supply</b> .
<i>There is no reason to conduct an assessment as it doesn't trigger the conditions set by the government.</i>	There is a high chance of contamination in fracked sites with little remediation possible. The land will remain changed.	The impact on ecology will be <b>minimal and remediated</b> .
<i>Assembly of Nova Scotian Mi'kmaq Chiefs put out a statement against fracking in 2025. How is this project in the name of peace and friendship, or appropriate re the duty to consult?</i>	We take these concerns seriously and will be consulting these communities before continuing and will follow free, prior, and informed consent.	The <b>province oversees consultation</b> we are just engaging with communities.

Key Questions to Ask	Green Flag Responses	Red Flag Responses
<i>Have you undergone an environmental or impact assessment?</i>	Though we have yet to undergo an environmental or impact assessment, it will happen before exploration, and we will consult Indigenous Nations, community, and environmentalists.	There is no <b>reason to conduct an assessment</b> as it doesn't <b>trigger the conditions</b> set by the government.
<i>Will exploration occur even if community engagement is overwhelmingly opposed?</i>	We will follow community consent and will not peruse exploration.	We will follow the <b>process laid out</b> by the province re landowner rights.
<i>What will come from exploratory drilling?</i>	Fracking and resource extraction will occur if it is deemed successful, and private interest is piqued.	We see large financial and job opportunities and the ability to <b>power Nova Scotia for the next 200 years.</b>
<i>What new information will be learned that isn't already in the Gas Atlas?</i>	It is unclear if anything new will be learned from this exploration.	It will further pinpoint subsurface <b>energy capacity.</b>
<i>The government said this would lead to affordable energy. How?</i>	There is no affordability guarantee. Gas is subject to a variable market economy.	Gas will provide a <b>variety of economic opportunities</b> , including energy affordability.
<i>How would this lead to independence from the U.S.?</i>	There is no certainty that this will lead to independence from the US. American companies and exports are all viable options.	Developing our own gas will <b>ensure our independence.</b>

## What to be cautious of in answers:

Red flags to watch out for include a lack of detail, deferring responsibility, large amounts of political or industrial jargon, an unwillingness to address negative feedback or take criticism, and more descriptions than facts.

## Deeper Dive

1. **Response:** “Exploratory drilling is a non-invasive analysis of bedrock to determine what gas deposits are available.”

**Why it's a red flag:** Evidence suggests that this is not the case. The exploratory process is still just fracking. It may not be as large or as long but it still requires pressurized water and chemicals to access bedrock and can still pose a lot of risks.

2. **Response:** “New fracking practices have mitigated the risks and several countries conduct fracking safely.”

**Why it's a red flag:** The response doesn't site examples of safe practices or locations. Current operations in B.C., Alberta and Texas have all contributed to quakes, droughts wildfires, and health issues within recent years.

3. **Response:** “Minimal water usage is required we are in agreements with a community to utilize their water supply.”

**Why it's a red flag:** This response is just untrue. The process of fracking is very water intensive. Some operations in BC have used the same amount of water as a medium sized city (Nanaimo).

4. **Response:** “The province is in charge of consultation, we are just engaging with communities.”

**Why it's a red flag:** This is deferred responsibility. It also undermines known opposition and sets a precedent for ignoring community consent.

5. **Response:** “There is no reason to conduct an assessment as it doesn't trigger the conditions set by the government.”

**Why it's a red flag:** There are issues with Nova Scotia's environmental and impact assessment process. Not triggering one does not mean that the environment will not be adversely impacted. This also shows an unwillingness to ensure safe environmental measures beyond “checking a box” or doing the bare minimum.

6. **Response:** “Impact on ecology/the environment will be minimal and remediated.”

**Why it's a red flag:** Fracking (even exploratory) has a high environmental impact. Subsurface activity is hard to remediate as the water used can spread and seep into soil. Furthermore, gas companies have a long track record of leaving abandoned wells behind – meaning taxpayers have to foot the bill for cleanup.

7. **Response:** “We will follow the process laid out by the province regarding landowner rights.”

**Why it's a red flag:** New changes to legislation have made this process unclear. The province could force landowners to allow fracking on their property.

8. **Response:** “We see large financial and job opportunities and the ability to power Nova Scotia for the next 200 years.”

**Why it's a red flag:** This response ignores the fact that gas could primarily be exported for higher profits. It also ignores the fact that we need to transition away from fossil fuels to avoid catastrophic climate impacts.

9. **Response:** “Gas will provide a variety of economic opportunities, including energy affordability. ”

**Why it's a red flag:** There is no affordability guarantee. Gas power is currently a volatile energy source, especially as fuel costs continue to rise. In contrast, on-shore wind is the cheapest available energy.

10. **Response:** “Developing our own gas industry will ensure our independence. ”

**Why it's a red flag:** Because exports can turn higher profits, there is no guarantee that gas extracted in N.S. will be used to power our own needs. At the same time, many new gas projects across Canada are backed by U.S. owned companies – some with ties to Donald Trump and giant private equity firms like Blackstone and Apollo Global Management.