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NB Commission on Hydraulic Fracturing
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Dear members of the Commission,

I am addressing you as a concerned powerless citizen whose home lands have been listed as sacrificial land by far away modern day aristocrats. The worst part about it is that my elected provincial and federal representatives are ignoring my pleas. Also my two senators! In St-Louis we had two senators up to last year when one retired. I also want to let you know that this citizen will leave many words unspoken because Bill C-51 is hanging over his head.

People in general are not ready to lose any of their comfortable lives but they do not realize that we are living artificially way over our means. For sure the rich are outrageously rich but at the same time we all are culprits, for wasting resources from a very finite planet.

I am afraid that the government will eventually ask: "Do you want your check or no shale gas"? When push comes to shove, when all chaos break loose, we will be accused of causing the province to go bankrupt because we did not permit natural resources extraction. People do not realize that New Brunswick is going to be bankrupt with or without shale gas development. Other major big changes should happen in this province to prevent bankruptcy. Mismanagement, conflicts of interest, offshore tax schemes, and monopolies are big issues. I cannot neglect to mention our forestry mismanagement.

I also wonder why we initiate megaprojects that will take generations to pay? If we want to play with the capitalist system we need to follow the rules. For instance, if we cannot repay do not buy even if we need it. The new four lane highway #11, the nuclear station of Point Lepreau, the hydroelectric dam of Mactaquac and others come to mind. Right now Ecuador is obligated to exploit its natural resources and destroy its rain forests against all good logical reasons because the country needs to repay some megaprojects. We are not learning from the experiences of others, and that is not good.

I want to speak a bit more about conflicts of interest. Conflicts of interest are rampant among our elected representatives here in New Brunswick. Charles Thériault from Kedgwick has a series of videos on that subject: <https://vimeo.com/56563789>. As another example, Shawn Graham, when he was Premier of New Brunswick, brought shale gas upon us when his father was one of the owners of a shale gas company! Moreover, the RCMP are used by the elites to hammer down and enforce this reality. So, when one needs to report some social injustice, he or she cannot go neither to his or her elected official nor the RCMP.

We are certainly not learning from past experiences. Our total disregard toward the environment brings adverse climate change. Worrisome climate change is not a new reality. I remember being taught about this when I was in high school in the early 70's. Since the 1950's many messengers have sounded an alarm about this. Perhaps this started with Rachel Carson's "Silent Spring", which some say initiated the whole idea of ecology. Others have been discussing on the subject ever since – each with his or her biased point of view, limitations, and strengths. Sometimes it is hard to separate the noise and chaff from the real news, but we must if humanity is going to face the deep challenges and resolve the problems that we humans have created on our planetary home.

This time, I am choosing to use Pope Francis' words because he delivers a simple, clear, compassionate, and informed message in his encyclical "On Care for our Common Home." For me, the Pope as a person is no better or worse than others who speak on this matter. I was raised in the Catholic Church but I am not much of a follower of organized religion. I do have a deep spiritual connection to the living and inanimate world around me and I like to believe we are here to impart healing, goodness and even love into the world during our transient stewardship before moving on.

I really like how Pope Francis describes the enormity of the environmental catastrophe we face. He says we have enough information now to accept that we humans are destroyers of life. He insists the discussion should now shift into finding solutions. The Pope then gets to the heart of the matter about how we must look into ourselves and start the change right there, inside us:

The current global situation engenders a feeling of instability and uncertainty, which in turn becomes “a seedbed for collective selfishness”. When people become self-centred and self-enclosed, their greed increases. The emptier a person’s heart is, the more he or she needs things to buy, own and consume. It becomes almost impossible to accept the limits imposed by reality. In this horizon, a genuine sense of the common good also disappears. As these attitudes become more widespread, social norms are respected only to the extent that they do not clash with personal needs. So our concern cannot be limited merely to the threat of extreme weather events, but must also extend to the catastrophic consequences of social unrest. Obsession with a consumerist lifestyle, above all when few people are capable of maintaining it, can only lead to violence and mutual destruction. Yet all is not lost. Human beings, while capable of the worst, are also capable of rising above themselves, choosing again what is good, and making a new start, despite their mental and social conditioning...

http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html

For decades, there has been a huge effort by pro-industry voices to drown out the facts that Pope Francis and others are bringing forth. The truth is, we should be way past that stage by now if we want to survive. Everyday more voices are coming out on the issue of environmental protection. Recently, the national General Council of the United Church of Canada voted to divest from fossil fuels. These commitments and statements have been building for years. In October 2014, Mark Carney (formerly head of the Bank of Canada, now of the Bank of England) said: "...fossil fuel companies cannot burn all of their reserves if the world is to avoid catastrophic climate change." This quote from Mr. Carney is taken from an article in The Guardian, which is found online: <<http://www.theguardian.com/>>. The Guardian is an excellent source for the reader who is interested in important news stories about climate change that are never covered in our New Brunswick news media.

Hence, the discussion from now on must be about appropriate changes in our way of doing things and, most importantly, implementing these changes from the personal, provincial and national levels. The alternative is unthinkable, especially for those of us with children and grandchildren. I know we can do so much more than we do now. It has to be.

The Commission's commitment to openness and transparency should start by making public the full investigation of who burned the police cars the 17th of October 2013, because we know that none of us did that. We cannot trust you or anyone else who comes as messengers of the government and corporation and police force, who among them committed this crime and are still trying to unjustly blame people who care about the environment. Without this simple truth, we are being set-up for another ride.

Please read the article concerning the RCMP burning their own cars. It appeared in "The Brief" of May 2015. The Brief is a publication of the NB Media Co-op. The title is: "Awkward questions raised at investigation of RCMP actions at Rexton shale gas camp." Pay particular attention to the photo in the article. You will notice an armoured vehicle with an awe-inspiring gun mounted on top! Also you will see all the helmets of the police. You then want the world to believe that the police officers got afraid and, leaving their cars behind, ran for cover!



<http://nbmediacoop.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/08/TheBrief-May2015.pdf>

You should be able to find the article by yourself but the best way to be informed about this folly is to ask questions to and get answers from your participants since you are responsible. In this regard, I will send parts of my conversation with Gordon Barnett, a private investigator and retired RCMP. He is doing work for a commission inquiry into RCMP wrongdoing in 2013 here in our region. That conversation will be send to your as a separate document to your web site: <http://www.nbchf-cnbfh.ca> .

After acknowledging that, another aspect needs to be address. The commission members are not a good representation of the people of New Brunswick. This weakness will be reflected in the eventual report. The reasons are:

First, the opinion of over 50% of the population will be ignored because most of us New Brunswickers are illiterate. For highly educated commissioners it will be difficult to reach out to this important segment of our society. The principal reasons being preconceived opinions and miscommunication problems. Included in literacy is the lack of knowledge of the legal jargon. I am wondering, is my conversation with Gordon Barnett going to place me in some legal problems? Will I be put on some black list with the advent of Bill C-51? After all, I am criticizing a "critical infrastructure" according to the RCMP. Lots of people will not participate in this consultation because of fear to have more problems on top of all the others.

Also, all three of you have many pensions, fringe benefits and a portfolio of diverse investments. You represent the wealthiest of New Brunswickers. I certainly do not question all the hard work you did to obtain that. The point that I want to make is about the ability of this commission to represent all the population. The wealthiest 1% of the population certainly do not want anything to change in our scheme of things. For instance, when the province gets to be bankrupt your old age pensions will be one of the first to go out the window. Your report will be favourable for shale gas development in hope to prevent that. Even if it means making the lives very difficult in 30 or 40 years. To me, it is a very selfish way to live. Younger commissioners would have a different perspective because they may never have a pension among other reasons.

Finally, I am a baby boomer just like you. I can hardly see how rich, old aged people can imagine what or how New Brunswickers will be living in 30 to 40 years from now. Living in that future time will be very difficult because of the accumulated degradation of the environment after generations of abuses. For sure you can envision the lives of the wealthiest 1% but certainly not for the others. A committee made of thirty years old people would be more receptive to this issue. For instance, they may want to look into renewable energies industries for jobs and eliminate dinosaur fuel industries. Actually at that time in the future, it would not matter anymore to you or me. So why are you on this commission?

With the fracking issues, which go altogether in the wrong direction for what our planet needs, as well as threatening to pollute my homeland, my life has been put on hold for five years now. The only good thing about it is that I have developed a good olfactory sense. I can now smell "phoney," and the stench of that is something I will not forget. My new and improved olfactory sense remembers very well the smell of LaPierre's report. To my greatest fears, I am starting to recognize the same smell here as well.

We and future generations wish for your impartial and factual consideration in these matters,

Roger Richard.