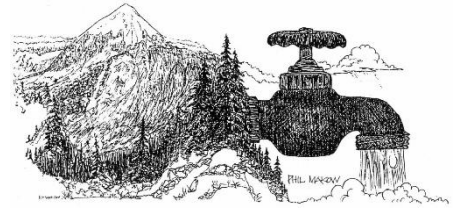


B. C. TAP WATER ALLIANCE

Caring for, Monitoring, and Protecting
British Columbia's Community Water Supply Sources

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Media Release

Did the Council of Canadian Academies' Frack Panel 'Cherry-Pick' the Scientific Evidence on Harms from Fracking?

Vancouver: In late 2011, Federal Environment Minister Peter Kent requested the Council of Canadian Academies (CCA) conduct a national assessment on the “environmental impacts” from fracking (“shale gas resources”). The assessment, conducted by a CCA appointed “expert panel,” was confined to a review of scientific literature on this topic.

The final report of May 1, 2014, [Environmental Impacts of Shale Gas Extraction in Canada](#), described that the panel conducted “an evidence-based and authoritative assessment supported by relevant and credible peer reviewed research” (page vii). CCA’s [May 1, 2014 news release backgrounder](#) confirmed that the panel “relied on peer-reviewed literature and reports from government, industry, international bodies, and non-governmental organizations.” The panel reviewed a total of 428 documents (found in the report’s reference section), from which the panel concluded that “**few** [bold emphasis] peer-reviewed articles on the environmental impacts of shale gas development have been published.” However, many of the 428 documents were not subject to peer-review, and some appear to be oil and gas industry lobby group propaganda.

In a recent audit of the panel’s 428 documents, the Alliance compared them to an extensive list of peer reviewed articles on shale and tight gas collected and regularly updated on-line by the American-based PSE (Physicians, Scientists & Engineers) **Healthy Energy**, the [PSE Study Citation Database on Shale & Tight Gas Development](#). As of March 3, 2015, the site boasts a total of **450** journal citations (which include abstracts and website links). PSE’s library, which begins in the year 2009 and continues, is divided into 12 categories or themes: air quality, climate, community, ecology, economics, general, health, regulation, seismicity, waste/fluids, water quality, and water usage. **Merely 10%, or 47, of the 450 citations are referenced in the CCA report!** (There were a total of 329 PSE citations published on-line prior to May 1, 2014)

The Alliance recently created a new reference tool from the PSE website, compiling all 450 citations, abstracts and research categories into [one, chronologically arranged, word-searchable, pdf document](#). That tool was valuable in making comparisons with the CCA shale gas report, the most important of which revealed that there are ‘**many**’ peer-reviewed articles on environmental impacts of shale gas development, many of which the [CCA’s team of 14 well-funded experts](#) failed to review and/or include. These findings are illustrated in the following comparative table:

Table with 8 environmental and health themes from the PSE Library, comparing the total number of the themes in CCA’s 45 peer-reviewed citations to the total number of the themes in PSE’s 329 peer-reviewed citations (2009 to April 1, 2014)

Citation Theme	CCA Report Totals	PSE Library Totals
Health	7	37
Air Quality	5	30
Water Quality	13	54
Climate	14	30
Seismicity	1	8
Waste/Fluids	5	42
Ecology	1	16
Water Usage	2	9

On December 11, 2014, the [Concerned Health Professionals of New York](#) published a 100-page document, [Compendium of Scientific, Medical and Media Findings Demonstrating Risks and Harms of Fracking \(Unconventional Gas and Oil Extraction\)](#). Their [press release](#) summarized a number of key findings synthesized from the peer-reviewed literature on PSE’s website, indicating significant concerns about the impacts of fracking on health and the environment. One week later, on December 17, 2014, the State of New York announced the prohibition or ban of fracking, statewide. On December 16, 2014, the Province of Quebec also declared a ban on fracking.

“Our examination leads me to believe that the Council of Canadian Academies’ expert frack panel ‘cherry-picked’ reports on the harms associated with hydraulic fracturing (‘fracking’). It is also apparent that many of the 428 documents cited in the CCA report on fracking were not peer-reviewed, contrary to what the report claims. This is unprincipled and unconscionable stuff,” says Will Koop, Coordinator of the B.C. Tap Water Alliance. “The cumulative evidence from an increasing number of peer-reviewed, scientific studies and commentaries on the harms from unconventional fracking, as cited, for instance, in PSE’s library collection, have been instrumental in re-shaping political decisions in the United States and Canada concerning fracking’s social and environmental license. In association, the growing evidence of these harms may strongly suggest why [the British Columbia government has been withholding final report studies on fracking and health effects](#) since at least May 2014, including a now two-year old, outdated literature review report on fracking. In relation, this ‘withholding’ may be linked to why the BC government recently cut funding for an 8-year-old watchdog organization, the **North East Oil and Gas Health Advisory Committee**, [“a driving force behind the government’s health risk assessment”](#) concerning unconventional gas and oil operations in northeast BC.”

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Website links: - The Alliance’s [single document collection of peer-reviewed citations](#) (**Version 1.0**, 380 pages, March 10, 2015), from PSE’s Healthy Energy Citation Database on Shale Gas & Tight Oil Developments. [Version 2.0, 478 pages, 555 references, updated on June 23, 2015.](#)

- The [45 peer-reviewed citations \(2009 – April 1, 2014\)](#) highlighted in the CCA report reference section.