

Update on Hydraulic Fracturing Review

During December, the committee held a number of all-day working sessions to jointly develop the proposed structure for the draft report on the review, the table of contents to guide the work of the technical writers, and prepare draft material for the various sections based on research completed to date. Draft material for the sections of the report was completed to provide a starting point for the technical writers in developing the final report.

Committee members also worked on developing interview questions, based on research to date, for use by the external consultant in conducting the jurisdictional regulatory review of selected petroleum-producing Canadian provinces and American States. The review includes two-hour interviews with the regulators in each jurisdiction, as well as collection of any reviews, issues, regulations or proposed regulatory changes from each. It is important that information and regulations pertinent to Nova Scotia's situation are included from each jurisdiction to ensure consistency and inclusion of areas of greatest risk in Nova Scotia for the eventual development of best practices and key findings.

Committee members also met to identify environmental risks related with hydraulic fracturing as outlined in the review scope, including the steps of site preparation and well construction, use of any chemicals and waste water transportation, storage and disposal. After the identification of the risks, the committee looked at the potential impacts and possible mitigation measures. Probabilities were based on statistics, where available, compiled from petroleum-producing jurisdictions.

Also in December, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released its draft findings of an investigation of ground water in Pavillion, Wyoming for public comment and independent scientific review. The EPA began investigating water quality concerns in the area three years ago by assessing groundwater quality and identifying potential sources of contamination. The EPA constructed two monitoring wells to sample water in the aquifer. For more information on its initial findings, go to <http://www.epa.gov/region8/superfund/wy/pavillion/index.html>. The draft report is now being peer reviewed by a panel of independent scientists.