



Council of Canadian Academies
Conseil des académies canadiennes

Harnessing Science and Technology to Understand the Environmental Impacts of Shale Gas Extraction

The Minister of Environment, on behalf of Environment Canada, has asked the Council of Canadian Academies to provide an evidence-based and authoritative assessment on the state of knowledge of potential environmental impacts from the exploration, extraction and development of Canada's shale gas resources. The Minister has also asked the Council to assess the current state of knowledge regarding associated mitigation options.

Progress Report

The Expert Panel on Harnessing Science and Technology to Understand the Environmental Impacts of Shale Gas Extraction held its fourth meeting from March 27-28 in Toronto. The report is currently being prepared for peer review. The next and final panel meeting will take place in June 2013.

Background

The North American natural gas supply portfolio is shifting from one dominated by conventional resources to one that increasingly includes unconventional resources, such as shale gas. Shale gas is a natural gas trapped in tiny bubbles within highly impermeable shale rock formations. Extraction of this resource has become more cost-effective in recent years, in part due to advances in both hydraulic fracturing ("fracking") and horizontal drilling. Because of both the reported benefits and drawbacks of this potential energy source shale gas has become an important public policy issue for Canadians. The Council's assessment will provide all Canadians with an evidence-based and balanced assessment regarding the science of exploration, extraction and development of Canada's shale gas resources.

The full assessment process is expected to take 18 to 24 months and will include a rigorous peer review exercise to ensure the report is objective, balanced and evidence-based. Following the review and approval by the Council's Board of Governors, the complete report will be made available on the Council's website in both official languages. More information about the Council's process can be found [here](#).

Expert Panel

The Expert Panel on Harnessing Science and Technology to Understand the Environmental Impacts of Shale Gas Extraction is chaired by **John A. Cherry**, Director of the University Consortium for Field-Focused Groundwater Contamination Research, Associate Director of G360 - Centre for Applied Groundwater Research, and Adjunct Professor in the School of Engineering at the University of Guelph. For a complete list of panel members visit the [Expert Panel on Harnessing Science and Technology to Understand the Environmental Impacts of Shale Gas Extraction page](#).



Members of the Expert Panel on Harnessing Science and Technology to Understand the Environmental Impacts of Shale Gas Extraction at a site visit near Calgary, AB, as part of their second panel meeting, August 2012.

Question for Assessment

What is the state of knowledge of potential environmental impacts from the exploration, extraction, and development of Canada's shale gas resources, and what is the state of knowledge of associated mitigation options?

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