

B. C. TAP WATER ALLIANCE

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

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Media Release

One Step Forward, Two Steps Back: Call for Federal Fracking Regulation Flies in the Face of Call for a Ban

Vancouver: The Council of Canadians made a puzzling announcement [in a May 12, 2015 media release](#), stating that it was supporting a formal request for the Canadian Government to regulate fracking.

The Council, with numerous Canadian chapters, had taken the position of being opposed to fracking (“hydraulic fracturing”) due to resulting below and above-ground environmental harms. The Council’s December 2013 document, *The Fracktivist’s Toolkit*, purports to “stop fracking.” Its website states: “[we are calling for a country-wide halt on fracking operations](#), and work with people in communities across Canada who are saying ‘No Fracking Way!’;” and declares that “[protecting the right to clean drinking water means banning fracking](#).” On October 11, 2014, the Council participated in “[Global Frackdown](#),” an “international day of action where hundreds of communities around the world call for a ban on fracking.”

[In media releases posted on its website since October 2014](#), the Council had opposed operational fracking, opposed proposed fracking, and supported fracking moratoriums in the Yukon, Northwest Territories, British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, Newfoundland, Labrador, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island (earlier postings included Saskatchewan and Quebec). On October 8, 2014, [the Council announced the results of a national poll](#), whereby “70%” of Canadians support “a national moratorium on fracking until it is scientifically proven to be safe.”

[In a May 13, 2015 blog](#), the Council’s National Water Campaigner revealed the basis for the Council’s justification for its sudden support of federal frack regulation. It incorrectly summarized that [the Council of Canadian Academies’ May 2014 national report on fracking](#), commissioned by Environment Canada, “**showed that decision makers do know enough about fracking to declare it safe.**” *

The B.C. Tap Water Alliance reported in a March 10, 2015 media release, [Did the Council of Canadian Academies’ Frack Panel ‘Cherry-Pick’ the Scientific Evidence on Harms from Fracking?](#), that the Council of Canadian Academies failed to conduct a thorough review of the peer-reviewed scientific literature on fracking, putting into question both the findings and political motives of the Panel’s final report. The Alliance’s media release included a link to a document it created, listing, in chronological order, [about 400 peer-reviewed papers on the harms from fracking](#) found on the [Physicians, Scientists & Engineers’ Healthy Energy website](#).

* Note: sometime during the evening of June 3, 2015, the wording in the May 13, 2015 linked blog was **changed** to the following: “showed that decision makers **do not know enough** about fracking to declare it safe.” As of 7:30 am, June 4, 2015, there nevertheless remain at least two posts with the original wording, [including the popular Rabble](#). Nowhere did the Council of Canadians admit the ‘error’ and subsequent correction. The error was pointed out 20 days previous on Rabble.

Anthony Ingraffea, the Dwight C. Baum Professor of Engineering at Cornell University, summarized the significance of the 400 or so “peer reviewed papers on the health and environmental impacts” from fracking published since 2008. He states that the “[vast majority show a clear and present danger](#),” demonstrating that “many problems are unfixable by regulations of any kind.” Since March 3, 2015, the number of peer-reviewed papers on PSE’s Health Energy website has increased to almost 500.

“Has the Council of Canadians crossed a dangerous line? Justification for federal frack regulation has no basis and contradicts its stated aims to ban fracking. If the Council fails to change its position, it will betray the trust it has so far earned from Canadians,” says Will Koop, B.C. Tap Water Alliance Coordinator. “The increasing research and testimonial evidence from those who have been harmed by fracking show that **one cannot advocate frack regulation and be opposed to fracking**. There is no middle ground.”

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