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SELECT COMMITTEE REGARDING THE RISKS AND BENEFITS OF HYDRAULIC FRACTURING

Public Hearings: Evidence

Wednesday, June 25, 2014 — 2:00 p.m.

Chair: Patti McLeod

**SELECT COMMITTEE
REGARDING THE RISKS AND BENEFITS OF
HYDRAULIC FRACTURING**

Chair: Patti McLeod
Vice-Chair: Lois Moorcroft

Members: Hon. Currie Dixon
Darius Elias
Sandy Silver
Jim Tredger

Clerk to the Committee: Allison Lloyd

Speakers: Jeffrey Peter
Paul Josie
William Josie
Vicky Josie
Erin Linklater
Tammy Josie
Brandon Kyikavichik
Bonnee Bingham
Robert Bruce
Esau Schafer
Danny Kassi
Fanny Charlie

EVIDENCE**Old Crow, Yukon****Wednesday, June 25, 2014 — 2:00 p.m.**

Chair (Ms. McLeod): Good afternoon, everyone. I want to welcome you to the Yukon Legislative Assembly Select Committee Regarding the Risks and Benefits of Hydraulic Fracturing. Before we get started, I would like to ask Elder Fanny Charlie to come up and give us an opening prayer please.

Ms. Charlie: [*Gwich'in spoken*]

Chair: Thank you very much for that. I would like to start with introducing the Committee to you. I'm Patti McLeod, the Chair of the Committee and member of the Legislative Assembly for the riding of Watson Lake.

Mr. Elias: [*Gwich'in spoken*]

It's good to be home again. This is the third community that my colleagues and I have travelled to. We have nine more to go and we look forward to hearing from you today. This is your time to go on the public record and voice your concerns or your views about hydraulic fracture stimulation in the oil and gas industry. Thank you for coming here today.

Mr. Tredger: My name is Jim Tredger. I'm the MLA from Mayo-Tatchun. It is a pleasure to be in Old Crow, home of the Vuntut Gwitchin and their traditional territory. I'm honoured to be here. I look forward to hearing your stories and your thoughts about hydraulic fracturing and your help for the select committee as we contemplate the risks and the benefits of hydraulic fracturing in the Yukon Territory. Thank you for coming out.

Ms. Moorcroft: Hello, I'm Lois Moorcroft, the MLA for Copperbelt South. I would like to thank Elder Fanny Charlie for the opening prayer this morning and thank all of you for coming out. I'm very happy to be in Vuntut Gwitchin traditional territory again. It has been awhile since I was here and I look forward to hearing what you have to say to the all-party select committee this afternoon. Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: My name is Currie Dixon. I'm the MLA for Copperbelt North in Whitehorse and I'm the Minister of Environment, the Minister of Economic Development and the minister responsible for the Public Service Commission.

Mr. Silver: Hello, I'm Sandy Silver. I'm the MLA for Klondike and the Leader of the Liberal Party. I would just like to thank you for sharing your day with us.

Chair: Thank you everyone. Also present is Allison Lloyd, to my right, who is the Clerk of the Committee; Dawn Brown at the registration desk there, who is helping us all with the registration and keeping us all organized; and our sound recording and transcription staff is also with us.

On May 6, 2013, the Yukon Legislative Assembly adopted Motion No. 433, thereby establishing the Select Committee Regarding the Risks and Benefits of Hydraulic Fracturing. The Committee's purpose, or mandate, is set out in the motion and it includes a number of interconnected responsibilities. The Committee has decided to fulfill its

mandate in a three-phase approach. Firstly, the Committee endeavoured to gain a science-based understanding of the technical, environmental, economic and regulatory aspects of hydraulic fracturing, as well as Yukon's current legislation and regulations relevant to the oil and gas industry.

Secondly, the Committee pursued its mandate to facilitate an informed public dialogue for the purpose of sharing information on the potential risks and benefits of hydraulic fracturing. The Committee invited experts to share their knowledge over four days of proceedings, which were open to the public and are now available on our website.

Finally, the third stage of the Committee's work is gathering input from the Yukon public, First Nations, stakeholders and stakeholder groups. This is the purpose of today's hearing and the 11 other hearings in communities across the territory. After these hearings, the Committee will be in a position to report its findings and recommendations to the Legislative Assembly.

A summary of our activities to date is available at the registration table. All the information the Committee has collected, including presentations from experts on various aspects of hydraulic fracturing, is available on the Committee's website.

The Committee will not be presenting information on the risks and benefits of hydraulic fracturing. The time that we're here today is allotted for hearing from as many Yukoners as possible. If you would like to present your opinion to the Committee, please ensure that you have registered at the registration table and please note that this hearing is being recorded and transcribed. Everything you say will be on the public record posted on the Committee's website.

I would like to welcome everyone in the audience to this hearing and ask that we all play nice. I understand we have a translator in the house, so if you require the services of a translator, please just indicate that to us and we can make that happen.

Thank you very much. We're going to proceed with some of the people who have registered to speak today. I'm going to ask Jeffrey Peter to come up to the table please first. You may begin any time you're ready.

Mr. Peter: Hello, my name is Jeffrey Peter. My father trapped and lived on the upper Porcupine River. He spent his whole life in Old Crow and he utilized the entire Gwich'in territory but, in particular, the upper Porcupine River was where he spent a lot of his time hunting and trapping. He was a bushman, a trapper, a hunter and he knew the value of the land, what it could offer him, his family and his people. It offered health, and it still does.

Our people still rely heavily on the land for physical and spiritual sustenance, but if it is not healthy, it can no longer help make us as a Gwich'in people healthy.

I don't use the land as much as my father or any of my ancestors but I enjoy it when I can. It gives me a place to be proud of. Seeing it intact and healthy is priceless to me. Just knowing it is healthy is priceless. When I'm driving the boat

on the Porcupine River and I see an animal — a caribou, moose, bear, wolf, fox — it makes me happy, truly happy.

It is a connection that I cannot adequately describe in words and it is a connection that works in two ways: it is there for me, to make me happy, but I must also be there to speak up for it when needed. This view does not align with hydraulic fracturing. The two do not go together. It is one or the other. Right now, I need to speak out against a process that, if it went ahead, would undoubtedly destroy the land and water for generations, if not forever.

I'm not an expert on hydraulic fracturing, but I have done enough research and heard enough testimony from both sides of the argument to take the stance of avoidance at all costs. I don't want to see it anywhere on Vuntut Gwitchin traditional territory or anywhere else in the territory, for that matter. I don't think that the risks are worth any of the benefits that we may get from hydraulic fracturing. I'm not an extreme environmentalist, but I do believe in protecting the environment from wanton destruction for the sake of money and progress.

I'm a realist in the sense that oil and gas extraction is currently a necessity. We need to develop certain resources, but some areas are best left alone, and certainly some processes are best not used. Hydraulic fracturing is a process that I don't want to see used in Vuntut Gwitchin traditional territory or the Yukon.

I don't have any children, but that is a possibility in the future, and I don't want to look at a child — my child — in the eye and tell them that I didn't stand up and say something when I had the opportunity. That's why I'm here today to speak out and tell you that I'm not in favour of hydraulic fracturing. I would like to see it banned from our territory, both the traditional territory and the territory of the Yukon.

Thank you.

Chair: Thank you very much.

Paul Josie — any time you're ready.

Mr. Josie: Good afternoon. I'm 28 years old. I've been living in Old Crow most of my life and been growing up on the river and fishing and hunting. That river is our source; it's where we get — it's where hunt in the fall; the caribou cross it; moose come down in the fall from the mountains; all the mountain water comes down. I could say with confidence that I could go there, drink and grab a cup of water and drink fresh water from the rivers.

I mean, we took an initiative to look into and — for the community to learn about hydraulic fracturing ourselves. There's a lot of risk within it, especially with our headwaters. I'm not one to be really in favour with it — I mean, not only for our generation, but the next generation and the generations to come.

Thank you.

Chair: Thank you very much.

William Josie.

Mr. Josie: Thank you, Chair. My name is William Josie and I would like to welcome the Committee to Old Crow. Yes, I'm just going to be short. The risk is just far too

great. My recommendation to the Committee is that there be no fracking in the territory. I don't know anything about it and I'm sure most Yukoners are in the same boat. There's just too much risk. There's a lot of concern about water. We worked very hard through the land claims process to protect the source of our water. So yeah, no fracking in our territory.

Thank you very much.

Chair: Thank you.

Vicky Josie — any time you're ready.

Ms. Josie: I welcome you guys coming here. My name is Vicky Josie. I've lived here for about 25 years. We have a camp upriver at Driftwood, where we go every fall and every spring to hunt and fish and drink water, and that's the reason I would like to back up not having fracturing also, because of all the stuff I hear what goes into the water — chemicals. They don't really tell you what it is. I don't want nothing in our water but the pureness of it itself — what comes from the headwaters. Having Eagle Plains close to the Eagle River, which goes down to the Bell River, then comes down to the Porcupine River — it worries me sometimes. I would like to keep the water fresh for the future, for myself and for all the animals that are out there that we eat also. Thank you.

Chair: Thank you very much.

Erin Linklater.

Ms. Linklater: Hi. My family is traditionally from here as well. Obviously, I feel a connection to this place; however, I grew up in Whitehorse. I've just recently moved back.

I've done quite a bit of research on fracking, or hydraulic fracturing, and I don't believe it's safe. I'm just going to — sorry, I have notes.

Recently I had the opportunity to go to Fort Nelson First Nation and do a tour with the First Nation, as well as a helicopter tour over top of the Horn River Basin, and really learned a lot about what we might do if fracking is going to be a reality in the Yukon. I mean, the way it's going now, everybody is dependent on fossil fuels, and obviously innovation isn't really catching up with the increasing scarcity of the resource. All of us are going to be kind of scrambling in maybe 100 years.

The reality is that, even if we're all opposed to it right now, it might end up happening. I would like to see, if it does, that you recommend to the government various preventive measures to have in place before this industry develops here, if it happens. One obviously is wastewater management. There has been a lot of water contamination in Alberta and northern B.C. There's lots of concern with the chemicals that are put into the ground. Also, when the water comes up, is it being put back in the aquifers? Is it being treated? Is it being trucked? Is it being stored? Where is it going?

If this were to happen in the Yukon, I would like to see a wastewater management facility, something to treat the water properly. I know it's really expensive and it deters lots of probably industry, but if that were going to happen here, I would like to see that is here in the Yukon.

Another thing that we learned about is that fracking creates a demand for something called frac sand mining, which is also very destructive to the environment. That's for the sand that goes into the chemical water mixture to crack open the rock or the shale. As well, that's very environmentally destructive. I wouldn't like to see that kind of mining going on in the Yukon.

Also another thing is the hugely increased emissions rates. B.C. has a carbon tax, for example, but the oil and gas industry is exempt from the carbon tax. We were told that one gas plant raises B.C.'s carbon emissions by three percent. So if something like that were to happen in the Yukon, it would drastically increase our carbon emissions. At the rate that climate change is going right now, I don't think it's a responsible move for us to be increasing our carbon emissions — so if Yukon could put in regulations concerning carbon emissions, for example, carbon capture and storage and treatment, or carbon taxes, for industry at least.

Another concern is the seismic lines and basically the imprint of a whole industry. We saw — flying over — just last week, I was flying over our territory to Vuntut National Park. It's so beautiful and it's untouched, and then flying over the Horn River Basin is just like a complete contrast. The land is just scarred from wherever you can see. There are old seismic lines that are just straight, but then there are the mitigated lines. The mitigated lines are essentially straight as well. It doesn't really make much of a difference. You can see all the tracks from all the moose and all the animals using it. There are not really any sufficient studies to see how that affects the animals, which also brings me to the point about baseline data.

We need adequate baseline data for water, hydrology, hydrogeological information, studies of the animals — especially the fish. I saw one pipe going directly into the river, sucking out the water to a large gas plant a few kilometres away. I can't really imagine, like, a huge tube sucking directly up from a river — what that would do to fish habitat and vegetation. Stuff like that really has to be mitigated or prevented completely — which I would be on the side of preventing it completely, especially in Vuntut Gwitchin traditional territory.

We were also told that the industry can be very manipulative, and even if they go through something like the YESAA process — like they would probably go through here — and they are asked to mitigate and everything, and they consult with the First Nations, that often there's a lot of shortcuts taken. So we have to be ahead of the game on education and having people who can understand the industry locally, so we can help to — have environmental monitors, have archaeologists and anthropologists and geologists assessing what is going on and standing up for our rights.

The social aspect is also a really concerning factor of this industry. It's just an enormous economic boom that happens — lots of foreign people coming in. In Fort Nelson, they said right away there were escort services being established. The First Nation kind of shut that down right away. Drug use has

soared and alcohol abuse. Also the workers — many of them are now making huge amounts of money a day and it's really affecting the children. Some of the educators that I've spoken to say that there's sometimes zero-percent learning going on in the classrooms.

One woman who is from here but she works in Alberta on some places that have the high benefits agreements and everything — she has seen kids drug-addicted by age 11. There's just really — like, there's a lot of money, but it's not being done or used in a productive, healthy way. People are losing their culture. They're losing their hunting grounds. All the traplines in the Horn River Basin are now ruined due to the equipment being used, the seismic, the mulchers, just the general noise and activity going on over there. A lot of those trappers have lost their traplines, as well as their hunting territory. The community has one last spot, which is in the Liard Basin, and they're really trying to protect that, but already seismic is going through there. She was just reiterating that, without their land, they don't have a culture and a sense of being and people are really getting lost. That's happening extremely rapidly.

To summarize, I'm definitely opposed to hydraulic fracturing in the Yukon, especially in Vuntut Gwitchin traditional territory. But in preparation for this industry and the increasing demand for fossil fuels, I hope that we're kind of ahead of the game in establishing baseline data, regulations for industry for water.

Thank you for coming here and listening to us.

Chair: Thank you very much.

Tammy Josie.

Ms. Josie: Hi, I'm Tammy Josie. I would first begin by saying it's our honour to have you here on our land. I'm going to be blunt. I don't want fracturing done in the Yukon. I've made most of my living cooking in camps in Alberta, B.C. and all over the Yukon. I've seen oil and gas, logging, and everything. I don't want to see that up here. It's bad enough we're having it done in Eagle Plains — exploration — but it's very minimal, I guess.

In our national anthem, I hear “true north strong and free.” When I hear that, I think of crystal clear waters that you can drink, and vast landscapes of animals and beauty and land, pure land. It's how we all live. It's very rare to have that in the world today, in the entire world. I would like to see our Yukon protected because I've worked in every single community in the Yukon. I've seen all their land, and I love it. It's absolutely gorgeous.

Thank you for your time.

Chair: Thank you very much.

Brandon Kyikavichik.

Mr. Kyikavichik: Thank you guys for coming to our beautiful country here. My name is Brandon Kyikavichik. I'm chief and council here in Old Crow. Natural resources is part of my standing committee.

For the most part, there's this veil of uncertainty over fracking or well stimulation in general — and I'm speaking specifically about the community of Old Crow here. There's a

lot that we don't know about it. I think for the most part, the concern is hydrology. People respect and value our water and our water systems around here. The thing is it's not just the contamination of water that scares us. It's the potential excessive use of water, which usually happens when they have to stimulate wells.

The thing is if they do end up in a situation where they have to use a lot of water, then you're talking about a lot of technical stuff with how the volume and flow and temperature of the water is changed and everything, which is not good for fish habitat. Then, if you have tons and tons of water that has a minute amount of chemicals in it, but that minute amount becomes a large amount over time, then you're not really sure what you're dealing with at that point.

Northern Cross has some operations in our traditional territory right now and they say that they're not going to frack, but they've also said a lot of things since 2008, I think it was, when they first came up here. What a lot of us here have had the benefit of seeing is that we've been able to see this situation with Northern Cross evolve since the beginning. Their plans were extremely different when they first came here, and now they're different today and their plans are going to be different five to 10 years from now.

The same can be said about industry in general. Our collective knowledge is advancing so fast that governments all over the world are scrambling to try to keep up with the technology boom. The same goes more so even for First Nation governments. It's creating an information gap. Even the Yukon government is trying to fill this information gap, obviously, with you guys here. The thing is, I don't really see us filling that gap. I see it as an individual, or myself, my own opinion, it's going too fast and it's going to keep going faster.

With that type of uncertainty, it's going to be extremely difficult for us to accept something as controversial as fracking in an environment that we hold so dear to our hearts. My grandfather — his name was John Joe Kyikavichik — he had this one speech he always gave about water. He's even on a show on NEDAA or something like that. I can't remember which one. It's about how all life is connected to water, from the insects to the humans to the animals to trees and plants and vegetation. For that reason, we hold water very dear to our hearts. That's why it's something that we're reluctant to risk.

The thing is that I'm going to be honest here. I know that I need this stuff to live, and I would like to say that I'm not embarrassed to say it, but I kind of am in a way embarrassed to say that I do need this stuff to live. I know that; I realize it. The thing is that we're just destroying other people's lands so that we can live comfortably using the stuff that they're destroying other people's lands to get.

Be that as it may, what's done is done. Right now we're left with one of the most majestic parcels of land in the world. I'm talking about the entire Yukon here, with the mountain ranges and the Yukon River, the wetlands, all the beautiful basins. One of them you're sitting right at the bottom of right now. It's gorgeous here. The environment we have is a commodity that we just can't afford to risk. At this point, I

think oil and natural gas in general is a commodity that's a lot less important in the grand scheme of things. Even though I believe I need it to live, I think there are other things that are much more important to life and to the quality of life than being able to use certain oil-based products and things like that.

I think the time is now for us to start looking to other sources of energy. I think that with the advancement of our collective knowledge moving so quickly, it's not too far-fetched to say that we can start looking in that direction. But for the time being, anyway, the point is that we really need to be careful. This is one of the few majestic pieces of land left. We need to tread softly; we need to make sure we're making good decisions here.

I think for now, we continue to suspend fracking in the Yukon and we continue to look into ways that we can ensure the quality of life and the environment of the Yukon is not affected negatively by the decisions that we make as leaders. That's it. Thank you.

Chair: Thank you very much.

Bonnee Bingham, please.

Ms. Bingham: Good afternoon. Thank you for coming to hear our voices. I have quite the extensive background in oil and gas development. I worked on the oilrigs in Alberta for five years prior to my moving back to the Yukon. I came back to Old Crow; I was not born and raised here. I was born and raised in Whitehorse. I came back to Old Crow to teach my daughter about our culture so she can get to know our people and our land, our traditions.

I definitely did not want an Alberta oil baby. I wanted to have a Yukon bush baby, where I could teach her how to live off the land. I could see where society was going and I didn't like it. Working on the rigs, I made a lot of money. I didn't save any of it. I have felt a lot of guilt over it. I knew that I wasn't doing the environment any favours. I've seen things go wrong on frack jobs. I've seen cement jobs not take, leaking into the ground. Although industry standards have gotten better over the last 10 years, there has been a lot of destruction in Alberta. You can tell, just flying from Edmonton to Whitehorse on a clear day, it's total grid.

People are affected in low-lying areas by off-gassing. The influx of money — people are not taught proper fiscal management in the cases of when they start working. It almost always leads to drugs and alcohol and other things that go along with it. The people that don't make the money lead to crime. It's just not a very good lifestyle.

I've also met people from First Nations in Alberta that got royalties as soon as they turned 18. The big influx of money does not teach any kind of responsibility. It doesn't help the people at all. If you go to any res in central Alberta, you'll see smashed-up brand new cars; you'll see people on the street. I knew one girl who turned 18 — I met her shortly after in Edmonton. Within six months, she had spent \$25,000 and didn't even have anything to show for it.

This is not an isolated incident. It happens time and time again, not only with the people but the land, the water. I think

our biggest concern as Vuntut is the quality and quantity of water. The amount of water used for a single hydraulic fracturing job is enormous. Working on the rigs, I can tell you it would take me a whole day of constant hauling water just for one frack job. That water is contaminated and unusable afterward. That's a big concern. Especially any jobs that might happen in our traditional territory — it's very close to our headwaters. Obviously everyone has talked about the animals, the insects, all the connectivity of how water holds everything. We ourselves are 95-percent water.

On a global scale, we're running out of clean drinking water to begin with. I think that we're very fortunate to be in a place where, as people have previously said, we can go to a creek that's coming down from the mountain and drink straight from it. We're very lucky.

The destruction that the oil and gas industry has created all throughout the world — the Amazon, other ecosystems — I would not like to see — I don't want that to happen here. We've lived thousands of years here as Gwich'in people; we've lived off the land; we've lived with water; we've lived on the water. These are all very important things. These are the reasons I moved back here.

So I am opposed to hydraulic fracturing, not only in Vuntut traditional territory, but also in the Yukon. I think that, as Brandon said, we're very fortunate to live in this beautiful majestic place. This is one of the last places where I would like to see this to be a place where people come to enjoy the wilderness. We already have Europeans coming over because they've overpopulated and don't have this kind of vast land to be able to be away from each other. The wilderness — it's so valuable to everyone else around the world, I just wouldn't like to see that all go away for a little bit of money.

In the grand scheme of things, it will be a little bit of money. It doesn't filter down to the communities; it doesn't filter down to the people. It doesn't filter down to the communities; it stays with big oil and that's why they're called big oil.

Thank you for listening and coming to our community to hear our concerns. I'm grateful. Thank you.

Chair: Thank you very much.

Esau Schafer, please.

Unidentified Speaker: (inaudible)

Chair: Gone to the store.

Robert Bruce.

Mr. Bruce: Thank you, Madam Chair. If I may, Madam Chair, if I could do a little translation for Fanny Charlie. Before her prayer, she said she didn't understand what the meeting was all about, so if I could explain in my language why we're here, maybe she'll speak later to the Committee, if that's okay with you.

Chair: Yes.

Mr. Bruce: [*Gwich'in spoken*]

Thank you.

Now, you heard a lot of people came before you today, expressing their feeling about the land and the animals. We here in the community of Vuntut Gwitchin, we don't know

much about fracking but most of our young people have been involved in an oil company and most of them understand. They can read and they pick up what fracking is all about. You people that are sitting around the table, you are all members of the Legislative Assembly. You got to take these comments very seriously and deal with it at your level. This is why we come before you to express our feeling.

For a long time now, we've had an oil company being involved in this north Yukon since the 1950s and 1960s, until the Berger inquiry came through. A lot of people in Old Crow fought against development for oil and gas, so they talked to the Berger inquiry and they put a moratorium on oil and gas for 10 to 20 years. Now that moratorium is lifted. So now that it's lifted, now we got Northern Cross south of us doing drilling. Like the younger person who talked before — Brandon said oil companies make a decision, say they're going to follow their decision and that's happening, but it's always changing. They come in with a new plan; they don't stick to the plan that they preached to the community about.

These are the kind of things young people are afraid of for their future generation. Therefore, I call upon the Committee to look toward putting a moratorium on fracking for at least 25 to 30 years so our younger generation that's growing up can deal with this issue for their next generation. We only can do so much as humans for this community. We've all been involved in leadership before and politics. With that, if the Yukon feels like putting a moratorium on fracking deals as it comes, I think we'll win in that way and will save the environment.

When you fly up to Old Crow, you don't see any roads all over like when you go to Whitehorse and Dawson — you see all kinds of roads all over. We're not like that up here. We want it to stay that way. So this is why we fight so hard in every Legislative Assembly and community meetings and public meetings. Any gathering that we have, we fight for our environment, we fight for the fish, caribou, the air and water. We'll be having a Gwich'in gathering coming up on the 21st to the 25th, and I'm sure this will come up there again. People will be talking about it. It's not only today that we talk about it; we're going to talk about it for many years to come.

Also with the oil company — you know, we fought hard to keep Northern Cross away, since 1995. Once you open the door for them, you're not going to stop any oil company from doing what they want to do in the north.

So once again, I ask that you put a moratorium and think about that strongly as you travel. I think that's the only way we're going to save what we're talking about: our land and our future and our culture and the way we live.

Like Bonnee mentioned before, money don't get us anywhere. She worked in the oilfields and she found that money didn't get her anywhere, so she came back to her community to live a good life with her daughter. Those things are happening. We believe a lot of people that live in Whitehorse want to come back to live up here, because it's so nice and they can live on.

With that, I want to thank you for coming to our traditional territory and listening to our young people speaking to you. That's very important. Mahsi' cho.

Chair: Thank you very much.

Esau Schafer — any time you're ready, sir.

Mr. Schafer: Good afternoon. I welcome you all to my community. First of all, my name is Esau Schafer and I was born out on the land in the headwaters of Whitestone in early 1952. I take that for — I cherish that really lots, where I was born out on the land. I was born in a toboggan out on the dog team trail with my parents. So that I cherish very much, and I cherish that land where I was born very much.

I was born there clean and I'm still healthy and I still want to continue to teach the young generation that's going through transition to a different culture. That is hard to do. That's what we call hard times in our survival of our culture. A long time ago, when our real ancestors, our elders, were around on this precious land of ours — if it wasn't for them, today I don't think we would be here. We would be elsewhere. God knows where, but I thank my elders for taking that time to get us to where we are today. A lot of those pictures are up above us are around up here. They talked strongly in the Berger inquiry on no development. Today, I think this is the final stage of again development, and that's called fracking.

To me, when I think back on my elders, it's sad to see our young generation have to suffer for development from other people on their own traditional land and the water itself also. For many years, we walked this land freely and healthy. We depend on it. Every season of the month, we depend on this land; we depend on the water. Right now, we're depending on salmon coming up, but, you know, that is closed, so that's part of our culture we have to sacrifice in order to have a healthy future for our young generation. That's what you call survival — part of it.

Anyway, that's just part of my story on my side. I've been working, in my young days — in my young age, I worked in industrial areas too, so I know a little bit about oil companies and how they work and how they do stuff. They're there to make money for production. When they're out there on the land, where there's nobody around, you think policies are followed sometimes? I don't think so.

We need a strong mandate to kind of monitor development within our area. Like I say, we depend on the land and we depend strongly on the Porcupine caribou herd. That's one of the dangers I always fear — what might happen with the Porcupine caribou herd and the fish habitat also, because of running water from the headwaters. If we come to a big stumbling block, our culture is lost.

Just with that, I do not support fracking within the Yukon or within my traditional area. Thank you.

Chair: Thank you very much.

Danny Kassi.

Mr. Kassi: First of all, I would like to welcome you guys to the community. I'll tell you a bit of the experience I had in 1983, '84, '85 in the Beaufort. There were about 10 us

who were working from the community. We worked for Beaufort Drilling. We rebuilt this old ship for accommodation. They put a big water filtering system in there. In the wintertime, all the drainage from that ship — they say it's clean water. We picked up three dead seals every two days in that water, and they tell us to shut up because it's their policy; we can't say nothing; they'll fire us. That's what happened.

It can happen; it will happen. If you look at down south, with all the developments and all the animals, the contamination — it is down there. Us, we're really fortunate. We've got migrating animals; we've got migrating fish and birds. They used to have that down in southern Yukon; they don't even have that anymore because of minor developments and stuff.

We're lucky to still have that. So I oppose fracking and the reason why is: If water could catch fire, the answer is no. Thank you.

Chair: Thank you very much.

I'm going to propose that we recess for 15 minutes, since we're at the end of our list of people who wanted to come up and share with us. We'll recess for 15 minutes while you have some snacks and maybe chat, and we'll come back and see if there's anybody else who wishes to address the Committee. Thank you very much.

Recess

Chair: Thank you, everyone. Is there anybody else who would like to address the Committee? I realize this is maybe not the best forum for some folks to raise their concerns on either the risks or the benefits. I want to just let people know that they can go on the website, and the website address is available at the registration desk. There's a form on the website where you can enter your comments. You can send us an e-mail, write us a letter, any form that you're comfortable with in submitting comments — we'll be happy to receive them.

One more time, does anybody wish to address the Committee? Do you know of anybody who would like to address the Committee who isn't here?

Elder Fanny Charlie.

Ms. Charlie: *[Gwich'in spoken]*

Chair: Would you like to relay that to the Committee?

Mr. Bruce: My name is Robert Bruce. I'm going to translate on behalf of Fanny Charlie. What she said was that — what she heard was going on here — she doesn't understand what we're talking about but, after a little bit of translation, she said what everybody was saying, she agrees with that. She doesn't want any involvement with development and fracking and stuff like that. This is for future generations, for the younger people. She's happy with what she heard mostly young people talking, and that's for their future. She just wishes if this Committee could take in what the young people are talking about, that there be no fracking, no development and oil and gas. That was her comment.

Chair: Thank you very much, and thank you to Fanny Charlie.

With that, I believe then the Committee will be adjourning now. I want to really express my thanks and gratitude for hosting us in your community of Old Crow. We really appreciate this opportunity. I personally really appreciate the opportunity to see your community. I've never been to Old Crow in my 35 years of being in the Yukon, so it is quite a special thing for me. Thank you very much.

The Committee adjourned at 3:36 p.m.