

**From:** Leonie Joubert [communications@emg.org.za](mailto:communications@emg.org.za)

**Subject:** Fwd: Hydraulic fracturing in the Karoo: request for information

**Date:** 3 March 2014 15:18

**To:** Stephen Law [stephen@emg.org.za](mailto:stephen@emg.org.za), Thabo Lusithi [thabo@emg.org.za](mailto:thabo@emg.org.za), Jessica Wilson [jessica@emg.org.za](mailto:jessica@emg.org.za), Taryn Pereira [taryn@emg.org.za](mailto:taryn@emg.org.za), Mandy Moussoris [mandy@emg.org.za](mailto:mandy@emg.org.za), Denile Samuel [denile@emg.org.za](mailto:denile@emg.org.za)



EMG team

Here's the first substantial response from the DWA regarding the query went through earlier in Feb. Still nothing substantial from the DEA and nothing AT all from DMR.

I've included my initial thoughts in red, below.

My next step: a critique of this approach from us (the EMG team) as well as from the Centre for Environmental Rights and Carin Bossman.

Could you include any thoughts, to help us critique this response?

Much appreciated.

Leonie

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Muir Anet <[MuirA@dwa.gov.za](mailto:MuirA@dwa.gov.za)>

**Subject:** RE: Hydraulic fracturing in the Karoo: request for information

**Date:** 25 February 2014 20:06:26 GMT+2

**To:** Leonie Joubert <[communications@emg.org.za](mailto:communications@emg.org.za)>, Singh Anil <[SinghA3@dwa.gov.za](mailto:SinghA3@dwa.gov.za)>

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Dear Leonie

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Regarding your questions the following:

- 1) Prevention of leakage of fracking fluids by following Best Management Practices (are these published yet?) in terms of casings placement and grouting, pressure testing to determine if leaks exists before any fracking is done (how robust is this method, are the skills available in SA to ensure it's done properly, will there be independent oversight?). Decommission a well if leaks are detected(no fracturing allowed) (assume this means no further exploration or drilling will happen, and no frackling fluid will be put into the well?). Monitoring wells with regular sampling will be instituted (to test for what - if no fracking fluid is present, what will be tested for?).
- 2) The Department of Water Affairs is currently busy establishing resource quality baseline conditions (assume these will have to be published and implementable before exploration licences can be issued?). Furthermore the Department is based on comments received on its proposed declaration is considering developing regulation around the unconventional exploration and exploitation of natural gas, i.e. Shale gas, Coal bed methane and Underground Coal gasification, in cooperation with international organizations, i.e. USGS. Compulsory monitoring of surrounding water sources, be it ground- or surface water, should form part of these regulations. (ongoing concerns about whether there is enough capacity in SA to do the necessary monitoring and oversight.)

- Should such a spill occur. how will this contamination. and associated safety

procedures, be communicated to the affected communities?

- 1) The DWA has tried and tested guidelines in terms of toxic spills which should be re-assessed in terms of the pending fracking operations. (Given the unique nature of the environment being contaminated - i.e. deep underground, where mop-ops are impossible and the residue could sit for long periods of time, this would require very different guidelines to a surface mining spill, surely?)
- 2) Additional to the above, Sections 19 and 20 of the National Water Act (NWA) already caters for the reporting and handling of spills and emergency incidents. Current reporting does not require that the person responsible for the spill/incident report it to the general public or interest groups but to the SAPS or fire brigade. Obviously if the public is endanger they have protocols to follow to inform the public to evacuate etc. (As above, the uniqueness of the fracking process, and the depth of a potential spill surely call for very specific regulations and best practices?)
- 3) The USA has a web-site called FracFocus. The DWA is currently busy evaluating the efficacy of this web-site in terms of the South African National Water Act and specific water resources conditions. Such a web-site could serve as a mechanism to inform the public. Part of the considerations we want to build into the website is the reporting of leaking wells (as stated above best practice measures (learning from mistakes made in the US and elsewhere) this should be rare occurrence), dead wells (no gas), abandoned wells due to bad cement jobs (no fracking can be allowed here). The website through our regulations will require full disclosure of fracking fluids (constituents as well as volume). Our proposed regulations will also restrict fracking fluids in terms of not allowing carcinogenic components. (Given the limited internet access of many communities, is this model appropriate?)
- 4) At a recent interaction with industry, civil society interest groups and government one of the major stumbling blocks in the exploration for unconventional gas was the limited interaction between companies and the affected communities. As part of the EIA process and even before then there needs to be thorough engagement in terms of anticipated impacts including impacts on roads, health, water etc. and how these will be safeguarded and mitigated with emergency and contingency measures should something go wrong despite all reasonable measures being followed. (Thoughts?)

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