



Petition

Registration No.	43
Title	Ban all unconventional oil and gas extraction in the Northern Territory
Presented on	27 November 2019
Presented by	Member for Nhulunbuy
Referred to	Chief Minister and to the Economic Policy Scrutiny Committee
Assembly debate	If the Committee recommends the Petition be debated it will appear on the Notice Paper
Date referred	27 November 2019
Response due	6 May 2020
Response received	20 December 2019
Response presented	11 February 2020

Petition

Protect NT Incorporated

Petition to ban all unconventional oil and gas extraction in the Northern Territory

Dear Madam Speaker, Chief Minister and Members of the Legislative Assembly,

We the undersigned respectfully demand that all unconventional oil and gas extraction, commonly referred to as 'fracking', be permanently banned throughout the entire Northern Territory.

The Independent Scientific Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing in the Northern Territory identified 115 risks associated with fracking. The Inquiry Panel was instructed to discover how fracking could go ahead, not if it should, and the Panel made no guarantees that their 135 recommendations would fully mitigate the risks.

We find these risks unacceptable and call for you, our leaders, to represent us by banning all unconventional oil and gas activities in the NT.

And your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

Response

The Petition was lodged by Ms Pauline Cass on behalf of 6410 petitioners and called for the permanent banning of all unconventional oil and gas extraction throughout the Northern Territory.

The Northern Territory Government recognises the community concerns regarding the emerging oil and gas industry in the Northern Territory. In response, my Government announced an independent scientific inquiry on 3 December 2016 to investigate the environmental, social and economic risks and impacts of hydraulic fracturing of onshore unconventional gas reservoirs and associated activities. The Inquiry published its final report on 27 March 2018.

As the Petition states, in the final report from the Inquiry, the Panel made 135 recommendations, many of which will mitigate the identified risks of hydraulic fracturing. The Panel's opinion was that, provided all recommendations were adopted and implemented, the risks associated with an onshore gas industry would be mitigated to an acceptable level, and in some instances, avoided all together.

On 17 April 2018, the Northern Territory Government accepted all of the Inquiry's recommendations. Implementation has been coordinated by a team within the Department of the Chief Minister and overseen by an independent officer to ensure it is done transparently and effectively.

As of 30 November 2019, 54 recommendations had been completed, 70 commenced and 11 not yet commenced.

Throughout both the Inquiry and implementation progress, the Northern Territory Government is committed to transparency and stakeholder engagement. As a part of this, comprehensive progress reports are released quarterly, as well as regular community bulletins.

The Onshore Shale Gas Community and Business Reference Group has been formed to ensure stakeholders have visibility of the development of the implementation framework and its subsequent execution. Reference Group members represent the community, environmental groups, local business, the gas industry and local Government. The Reference Group has met six times since July 2018 and communiqués from each meeting are publicly available

Furthermore, the draft Strategic Regional Environmental and Baseline Assessment (SREBA) Framework has recently been released for public comment from 9 December 2019 to 14 February 2020, and we are encouraging the community to provide feedback.

In response to Recommendation 15.1 of the Inquiry, the NT Government determined that a SREBA must be undertaken before approvals for production activities are considered. The SREBA will inform works to be undertaken in the Beetaloo Basin over the next three years and provide comprehensive environmental data to inform planning and approval decisions; and set a baseline for ongoing monitoring of the health of the environment.

Protection of our natural environment is paramount. My Government is committed to ensure any onshore unconventional shale gas industry is safely developed under strict conditions and in tightly prescribed areas.

Should you have any further queries concerning this matter, please contact the Jobs and Economy Strategic Policy Team in the Department of the Chief Minister on (08) 8999 6495 or via email at hydraulic.fracturing@nt.gov.au.