



NEWS RELEASE

Fracking generally safe, includes manageable risks, can help reduce GHG emissions

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For Immediate Release

CALGARY—The actual harm to human welfare from hydraulic fracturing (or fracking) is extremely low, finds a new study released today by the Fraser Institute, an independent, non-partisan Canadian public policy think-tank.

“Contrary to popular rhetoric, the risks of fracking can be managed and minimalized in Canada and elsewhere,” said Robert P. Murphy, Fraser Institute senior fellow and author of [*Managing the Risks of Hydraulic Fracturing, 2020*](#).

The study dispels several myths about fracking and its effects.

Myth #1: Fracking causes earthquakes

In fact, seismic activity—which is typically very minor, causing no damage—related to fracking is not due to the practise per se, but rather wastewater disposal methods, which pump water back into the ground. Research suggests that altering the depth and flow rate of the water injection can minimize the risk of seismic activity.

Myth #2: Fracking systematically contaminates drinking water

Research has found that risks to drinking water quality are relatively modest, with very few incidents of contamination relative to the enormous boom in fracking operations. And again, problems typically stem from wastewater storage and disposal procedures that can be improved.

Myth #3: Fracking contributes to climate change

Fracking produces methane emissions—a greenhouse gas (GHG)—but research suggests that fracking operations emit less methane (per unit of output) than conventional natural gas wells. Furthermore, by making natural gas more abundant, fracking displaces the use of coal in electric power plants, which helps reduce carbon dioxide emissions that contribute to climate change.

Myth #4: Fracking is noisy

According to recent research, the indoor noise pollution affecting people who live near fracking operations reaches between 45 and 61 decibels—or slightly louder than a refrigerator (40 dB) but quieter than most normal conversations (60 dB).

“Before governments in Canada enact or prolong fracking bans, they should understand the actual level of risk and the ability of natural gas producers to mitigate those risks,” Murphy said.

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