



9 Upper Mount Street, Dublin 2

T: 01 642 5583

E: info@swanireland.ie

www.swanireland.ie

Sustainable Water Network (SWAN)

For immediate release

Tuesday 25 October

Research report finds fracking for shale gas incompatible with good water quality and recommends its prohibition in Ireland

Report launch: Buswells Hotel, Dublin at 1.00 p.m., Tuesday October 25th

The Sustainable Water Network (SWAN) is today publishing [an independent research report](#) on the impacts of hydraulic fracturing (fracking) for shale gas on water resources. The report, *Hydraulic Fracturing – Interactions with the Water Framework Directive & Groundwater Directive and Implications for the Status of Ireland’s Waters*, concludes that the carrying out of fracking and other shale-gas activities in Ireland is not consistent with achieving and maintaining good water quality and a healthy water environment and therefore should not be permitted. Later this week the Dáil will debate a Bill to ban fracking proposed by Fine Gael backbencher, Tony McLoughlin TD.

The key findings of [the report](#) include the following:

- There are numerous documented impacts on water bodies attributed to shale-gas activities, including increases in concentrations of salinity, methane, heavy metals, naturally occurring radioactive material and reduction in water body levels;
- Many impacts arise due to contamination from well-casing leaks; leaks through fractured rocks; transportation spills and disposal and spillage of inadequately treated wastewater;
- Gaps in legislation and inadequate regulatory capacity mean Ireland would not be in a position to adequately regulate the industry.

Dr. Kieran Craven, one of the authors of the report, speaking before the launch, said,

“Our research shows that over the past decade there have been many documented impacts to water bodies arising from shale-gas activities. Degradation of the water environment has occurred in regions of the US, where regulation has typically lagged behind industry. Based on a comprehensive review of the scientific literature, it is our view that many of these potential impacts would lead to the pollution of both surface and groundwater in the proposed regions of Ireland.”

Sinead O’Brien, Coordinator of the Sustainable Water Network (SWAN) said,

“We commissioned this work because we were naturally concerned about potential issues that fracking might pose for Ireland’s waters and wanted an objective review of documented impacts in countries where fracking was already happening. We knew this was an emotive issue and were aware anecdotally of problems in the US, but we were really taken aback by the level and range of

risk that this academic study found. And this risk arises throughout the entire life cycle of a shale gas well, at every stage, from the initial hydraulic fracturing to the storage and discharge of wastewater and the enduring problems posed by abandoned wells.”

Ms. O’Brien continued,

“Given the complexity of this emergent industry, the lack of transparency around its operation elsewhere, and the deficit of regulatory capacity here, it is clear to us that Ireland is just not capable of regulating fracking effectively in order to protect human health and the environment”

Due to the many documented impacts on water attributed to hydraulic fracturing for shale gas, combined with the absence of a coherent, effective governance and regulatory framework for the industry in Ireland, [SWAN has released a position paper](#) based on the research findings calling for the immediate and permanent prohibition of shale gas related activities in Ireland by way of primary legislation .

On Thursday the Dáil will debate [a private member's Bill](#) from Fine Gael TD, Tony McLoughlin, to ban shale gas extraction in Ireland.

- ENDS -

Available for interview:

- Sinead O’Brien, SWAN Coordinator
- Dr. Kieran Craven, main author of the report
- Kate Ruddock, Deputy Director, Friends of the Earth (regarding the Bill)

For any queries or to organise an interview, please contact the SWAN Coordinator, Sinead O’Brien: sobrien@swanireland.ie; (087) 6176177; (01) 6425583.

NOTES TO THE EDITOR

1. The Sustainable Water Network (SWAN) is an umbrella network of 26 of Ireland’s leading environmental NGOs, national and regional, working together to protect Ireland’s water environment through coordinated participation in water policy development and implementation. SWAN members are: An Taisce, Bat Conservation Ireland, BirdWatch Ireland, Carra/Mask/Corrib Water Protection Group, Cavan Leitrim Environmental Awareness Network, Celebrate Water, Coastwatch, Coomhola Salmon Trust, Cork Environmental Forum, Cork Nature Network, ECO-UNESCO, Friends of the Earth, Friends of the Irish Environment, Irish Peatland Conservation Council, Irish Seal Sanctuary, Irish Water and Fish Preservation Society, Irish Whale and Dolphin Group, Irish Wildlife Trust, Longford Environmental Alliance, Macroom District Environmental Group, Save Our Lough Derg, Save our Lough Ree, Save the Swilly, Shannon Dolphin and Wildlife Foundation, Slaney River Trust, Voice of Irish Concern for the Environment.

2. The 172 page report, which was two years in development, can be downloaded [here](#). It comes with a 2 page executive summary: http://www.swanireland.ie/download/resources/swan_reports_consultation_responses_presentations_&_other_material/Hydraulic-Fracturing-Water-Report-for-SWAN.pdf

3. Please see the report, in particular chapters 3 and 6, for details and supporting citations regarding the listed impacts.

4. The SWAN position paper ‘Impacts of hydraulic fracturing for shale gas on water resources’ can be downloaded here: http://www.swanireland.ie/download/resources/swan_reports_consultation_responses_presentations_&_other_material/SWAN-Hydraulic-Fracturing-Water-Policy-Position-.pdf

5. Tony McLoughlin's Private Members Bill to ban fracking in Ireland, scheduled for debate in the Dáil next Thurs 27th Oct, is online here: <http://www.oireachtas.ie/viewdoc.asp?DocID=33136&&CatID=59>