

Press statement

Monday, September 10, 2012

World joins South Africans in fight against fracking

International groups opposed to fracking, in the USA, Europe and Australia, have rallied in support of the Treasure Karoo Action Group (TKAG) in their fight to prevent the government from giving fracking in South Africa the green light.

“The support we have received locally and internationally since the government lifted the moratorium on fracking in South Africa on Friday (*September 7*) has been overwhelming,” said Jonathan Deal, Chairman of TKAG.

“It is clear that there is widespread abhorrence to this environmentally harmful, potentially polluting form of mining,” he added.

“The harm done by fracking is potentially irreversible - having a negative impact on the environment, affects the health of local communities, and does not deliver sustainably on the promises of job creation, community upliftment and energy provision as claimed by mining companies, such as Royal Dutch Shell, who despite their overt concern with ‘what is good for SA’, are only keen on growing profit,” he said.

International groups which have promised their support to TKAG include Food & Water Watch, FrackAction, Waterdefense, Attac International and Attac France, Artists Against Fracking USA, anti-fracking activists Mark Ruffalo and Josh Fox – producer of the film, *Gasland*, Fracking Ireland and Lock-the-Gate in Australia. Locally, TKAG is part of a strategic alliance of established NGO’s, including KZN based African Conservation Trust. Deal confirmed that TKAG had significantly also received a vote of support from the Southern Cape Land Committee (SCLC). “The SCLC is a local organisation representing the interests of rural communities. They have been independently outspoken about their opposition to fracking in South Africa.” Fracking opponents in SA are planning a national demonstration in front of Parliament on Saturday September 22nd – Global Anti-Fracking Day.

Fracking has been banned or restricted in 155 jurisdictions throughout the world.

The South African Cabinet announced on Friday that it had decided to lift the moratorium on fracking in the Karoo. The moratorium was endorsed by the SA cabinet in April 2011, followed by the appointment of a task team by minister Shabangu with the purpose of investigating fracking. She announced that the task team would focus, in particular, on the feasibility of fracking as well as its likely impact on the environment.

Since that time the task team has met in total secrecy and consistently refused to make its composition or findings public. On Friday, September 7th, Cabinet also apparently requested the mineral resources minister to “hold a series of public consultations with interested and affected stakeholders to provide further details”.

Meanwhile, the Treasure Karoo Action Group has pledged to take the fight to oppose fracking in South Africa to the constitutional court.

“Our research, as well as a legal-scientific review of the environmental management plans (EMP’s) of the three current applicants (Royal Dutch Shell, Bundu and Falcon) has revealed fatal flaws.”

“These flaws mean that the plans of the applicants are at odds with various South African laws and regulations as well as the Constitution of the country.

In addition to this, the internationally critical reputation of fracking, and the rejection of the destructive polluting technology by tens of millions of people in other countries has never been dealt with by our government (despite formal notification of these facts to our cabinet by TKAG) nor by any of the applicants to mine for shale gas in SA”, said Deal.

“It is our conviction that there are other less harmful and more sustainable means – including solar – to create jobs, generate energy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. A sensible approach now will pay dividends for the future children of this country and enable them to meet their needs.” said Deal.

“We do not have to sacrifice our health, well being and environment in the short term to line the pockets of foreign oil companies.”

“We simply cannot allow this threat to our water resources, our environment and the health of our communities to be carried out and we will take this fight to the highest court.”

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