

To: LisaP Jackson/DC/USEPA/US@EPA
Cc: <dswack@umn.edu>, Edward Hanlon/DC/USEPA/US@EPA
Date: 03/04/2011 11:44 PM
Subject: Re: hydrofracturing panel

4 March 2011

TO: The Honorable Lisa P. Jackson, Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency
cc Deborah L. Swackhamer, Chair, EPA Science Advisory Board
cc Edward Hanlon, Designated Federal Officer, SAB Environmental Engineering Committee

FROM: Lynn Howard Ehrle, M. Ed, Senior Biomedical Policy Analyst and Chair, International Science Oversight Board (pro bono)

RE: Recommendations Concerning Structure and Selection Process as Regards the SAB Hydraulic Fracturing Study Plan Review Panel

Dear Ms. Jackson:

I am a retired consumer law and economics teacher who now serves (pro bono) as Senior Biomedical Policy Analyst. I also founded and chair the International Science Oversight Board (INSIGHT), composed of 43 physicians, scientists, and policy analysts from 11 countries. For the past forty years I have conducted investigations into health risks from low-dose radiation, thus my interest in the fracturing issue. I have a file full of papers and books that demonstrate a monumental worldwide cover-up of radiation risks. I know you have been under tremendous pressure to minimize the obvious public health risks from this expanding technology. If anyone believes there is minimal damage to the environment just visit the Alberta Tar Sands. Of course, proving health risks is a tricky business, but the time is NOW to assert your authority and that of many concerned staffers. The following list of issues deserves immediate attention.

1. The oil industry has already stipulated that EPA has exceeded its authority, but that contention does not hold water. PR hacks tell us that you must perform a cost / benefit analysis, but industry studies tell us the benefits ALWAYS outweigh the costs. What all health science policy leaders should do is honor The Precautionary Principle and err on the side of caution.
2. As to industry claim that the content of chemicals used in the fracturing process must remain secret, but when should proprietary protection be invoked when the public health and safety is involved? Find a way to break this logjam.
3. In following the science it is essential that EPA fund a series of interactive studies to determine the additive or synergistic effects of radiation and chemicals. Risk assessment of single chemicals is a fraudulent process designed to delay and obfuscate the risks.

4. As to the advisory committee selection process, I can cite numerous violations of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA). The committees are stacked decks. In the current fracturing panel there is no one from the non-profit public interest NGO community (typical of other EPA advisory committees). There is no one who has expertise in low-dose radiation, This panel is not broad-based as it has 9 civil and chemical engineers and two petroleum engineers out of 22 members. I call upon you to establish a separate panel of low-dose radiation experts who have no industry connections to assess risks from radiation in the waste stream and its co-active impact acting in concert with the chemicals now in use. You cannot depend upon the Radiation Advisory Committee since it is composed of several with ties to organizations that minimize the impact of low-dose radiation. An effort should be made to include at least three public interest NGO representatives on all future committees.
5. Release to the public each panel member's conflict of interest statement as is the practice by many medical journals. Under current EPA rules these statements remain confidential. Therefore, it is impossible for you and other EPA officials to declare, as you have, that this panel is "independent."
6. Take immediate steps to de-politicize the entire agency. Independent policy analysts have criticized staffers for their cozy relationship with industry. You should institute a conflict of interest review of all current EPA staff and call for resignations of those who are in clear violation of the public trust. This review should also include the composition of current advisory committee members.
7. Strengthen whistleblower protection and establish a process to encourage dissent, thinking outside the box, and criticism of the conventional wisdom.

The public has every right to expect an EPA that is free from corporate influence and in house conferences with EPA officials. The captains of industry have a legal obligation to satisfy their stockholders and they have unlimited funds for lobbying and now, by Supreme Court decision, for direct political contributions. You are all we have when faced with the power-grabbing onslaught of special interests. The past is prologue. Adoption of these reforms will go a long way in correcting the unrestrained abuses during the previous administration that prevented The EPA from carrying out its mission.

Respectfully,
Lynn Howard Ehrle, M. Ed

Memberships: Radiation Research Society; National Writers Union – UAW Local 1981; American Association for the History of Medicine; AFT & NEA (ret); vice president and energy committee chair – Consumer Alliance of Michigan (1970s); twice nominated for a post on the Public Service Commission by two legislators; Author – first consumer textbook, Consumer Rights: Battle In The Marketplace (1970).

p.s. If you decide to establish a separate Radiation Consultation, I am prepared to submit names of highly qualified experts with whose work I am familiar. I trust you have read the two NY

Times pieces by Ian Urbina. Every EPA staffer should have a copy. I will reference some of its statements during the public comments session on Monday (via telephone).