

Ask For Fracking Explained

by Humphrey Boogaardt ¹

The anti-fracking movement has told over and over again the public, politicians and others the facts of why fracking for unconventional gas is so bad that it should therefore be banned. We have to continue to present these facts. Unfortunately despite all this work it has not been able to convince many decision makers that fracking should be banned. Therefore the time has come to start testing the knowledge about fracking of ministers, other politicians and proponents by asking if they can explain in layman terms what fracking for unconventional gas entails.

That includes explaining what slickwater is? What the type of chemicals are used, if they are toxic or not and in what quantities? How large is the water consumption per well and where does the water come from? What is the impact on local farmers and society? What is the size of the land clearance size, access roads and traffic issues, etc. What are the risks of well failure? The answers are to be based on evidence, not on general terms like “best practices” or “robust risk management strategies” or weasel words like “should”, because then they indicate that they do not know the answer. Fact-Checked against data provided by eminent academics like Prof. Tony Ingraffea. Presented ideally with diagrams, at least one basic drawing the questioner should be able to create : “sketch a cross section of a fracking well with distances”.

If they cannot do this simple task, we have to hammer them about how can they legislate or promote something about of which they appear to be ignorant. It is very important to ascertain if that decision makers understand the topic they are voting over. It is not only for us to ask questions, we should persuade the anti-fracking politicians to ask these questions in parliament to the proponents. If no satisfactory explanation can be given, the questioner should make a press statement in which they list what could not be satisfactorily explained and state that the minister is totally ignorant on a subject they support.

¹Principal of PaYUng Contracting www.payung.biz

This principle is also useful for a subject like electricity generation. For example ask to explain “What is baseload power and why do we still need it?” or “What is a duck curve”? Diagrams are fine.

It should be noted that just facts do not persuade politicians to make the right decisions, but to avoid public embarrassment of ignorance may make them do so. However once the facts are on the table in the open it will hopefully be more difficult for politicians to negate them.