Who Lied To You Today? Fracking

Companies that stand to make the biggest profits through lies, distortions of truth and selective editing of facts like fracking..Find author Bill Allin at http://billallin.com

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Almost all of what we are taught--we think of it as news--by television and other media, by politicians and by religious leaders is either false, misleading, misstatement of facts or plain deception. To them it's all part of the game of life.
Take the following for what it's worth, or leave it. It is not based on scientific research which, like statistics, can be manipulated to say anything the writer or sponsor wants. It is based on logic, what makes sense and what does not.

Hydraulic fracturing (also known as fracking) involves forcing toxic chemicals into permeable rock underground. Resource companies claim the process is safe, though they will not reveal what chemicals are used. The poisons remain within the rock forever, or until they are released into groundwater that people drink. In some cases fracking has been proven to cause minor earthquakes.

Chemicals are governed by law in the USA and available to public scrutiny in the Environmetnal Protection Agency's data base of toxic chemicals. Except for those that were in use before the law--Toxic Substances Control Act--came into effect in 1976. They were grandfathered and assumed to be safe, were never studied. Tens of thousands of chemicals in use today are not listed and need not be revealed by companies engaging in hydraulic fracturing.

That's why fracking companies need not reveal the chemicals used in their underground explosions. Chemicals that could leak into drinking water that would not even be tested by municipalities. Other countries depend on the EPA list of toxic chemicals as if it was exhaustive, which it certainly is not.

Why don't governments take action against the perpetrators of these crimes? The natural resource companies always claim that they offer jobs. To politicians, the offer of jobs may even been more attractive than a good bribe because more jobs mean a better chance of being elected next term.

When the resource companies--never ones to be inconvenienced by possible damage to the planet or to human health of its workers--feel threatened by politicians, they warn that closing down will mean loss of jobs. That tends to silence political interference.

As of 2015, the government of Canada has sole possession of and responsibility for 22,000 former mines contaminated with poisons in the area. In one former mine area alone, the Giant Mine in Yellowknife, once a few billion dollars of taxpayer money has been spent cleaning up the area, it will cost two million per year just to maintain the frozen ground where arsenic is stored. Residents around these areas fervently hope that flooding does not contaminate the soil of the land where they live, and their bodies in the process. All of those mining companies went "bankrupt" leaving taxpayers to clean up after them indefinitely.

Ironically, when the companies negotiate with the governments and find themselves forced to take measures to protect the health of workers and the environment, they tend to become more efficient and garner greater profits. However, this evidence has little impact on their drive to make profit as quickly as possible.

Our planet is not short of energy resources, no matter what you may hear. Big oil companies, who receive the most flack from the public, are the biggest investors in alternative energy sources such as solar energy and wind power.

The claim is that solar and wind are not dependable because they are not consistent and dependable sources of power when people need it most. For that reason, resource companies claim, taking resources from the ground is and always will be necessary.

But they never mention the most plentiful and dependable sources of all. Our planet is always warmer one kilometer and more beneath the surface--a common depth to dig for other resources--than it is higher up. Difference in temperature means a dependable source of power.

The oceans almost always have waves, even if they don't have much wind blowing above them. Waves have energy. Tides have energy so long as we have a moon.

More importantly, water temperature varies a great deal from the surface to a short distance below. That never varies, just as the heat from the interior of our planet never varies. Both are infinite for our purposes.

Even water itself is composed of hydrogen and oxygen, both sources of energy.

Could we run out of water to convert to power? Recent study has shown that there is at least as much water locked in rock in earth's mantel as there is in all the water on the surface of the planet.

What about desertification? Are not droughts causing fertile land to become deserts, as happened in the Levant, the land east of the Mediterranean that most westerners call the Holy Land? It is true that the Levant was once as fertile as the Garden of Eden--human agriculture began there--until climate change made it into mostly desert.

Even in Israel, Syria and Lebanon, farming takes place. It's all a matter of growing crops appropriate for the climate. Under the world's largest desert, the Sahara, lies the world's largest underground freshwater lake.

Fracking is not necessary to get cheap energy when free and sustainable sources that will last forever are available. We should not expect resource companies to be open about offering to do what is right by its employees or the planet. They have never behaved that way.

Bill Allin is the author of *Turning It Around: Causes and Cures for Today's Epidemic Social Problems*, a book about do-able and inexpensive solutions to our worst problems. Fracking is a social problem when it affects the lives of many people.
Learn more at http://billallin.com

Additional material about hydraulic fracturing

There are many, and I mean MANY, examples of fracking problems in the USA. Most of them involve leaking of chemicals into ground water that is later used as drinking water. Hydraulic fracturing involves having a soup of chemicals (no company will ever reveal the mixture because it would shock everyone and cause the practice to be stopped--they claim their mixture is an industry secret, a coverup) explode deep under ground. The purpose is to crack the rock (the explosions are that great) that natural gas that is trapped within the rock will seep out.

As you think about that and the nature of natural gas, being as gas that can seep anywhere, you can see that, unlike with liquids, natural gas is extremely difficult to control and contain. The chemical soup itself is easier to control if it is inside of a container on the surface of the ground. But underground, after an explosion of rock that no one can tell how much crack will happen (it is usually shale rock, not granite that would be easier to estimate and control) the liquid could go anywhere. In many cases in the US, it has gone into drinking water sources.

Many countries have banned fracking entirely, deeming it too risky. The USA and Canada, being essentially job whores, have made fracking legal and licensed in many places. (I use the term "job whores" as a derogatory condemnation, without meaning any reference to prostitution--which I do not condemn.)

The most attractive lure of fracking is jobs. That is what gets the attention of politicians and they in turn get votes based on their perceived creation of "new jobs."

In fact, fracking requires few workers. Some highly trained people are brought in from their last jobs (never from the untrained local labour group), plus truck drivers. I feel safe in saying that there is no community in existence where fracking has been used that is entirely satisfied with the industry. Most residents anywhere near the mines are afraid they or their children will die one day from contamination of their drinking water by the poisons from fracking.

Like virtually every natural resource company, when they have a financial problem they declare bankruptcy and vanish into the night. One Canadian mine will cost Canadian taxpayers $2 million every year, forever, to contain

poisons that if let out would kill every person in the nearby town.

Two additional points are worth making about fracking.

First is that it uses an enormous amount of fresh water, which is then contaminated by its chemicals. In Saskatchewan, for example, where fracking is taking place full bore, fracking is taking away fresh water needed by the Canadian province's most important industry, agriculture. Farms cannot risk using water that could possibly be contaminated by fracking chemicals because produce from the farms is all used for food. Already a province that is usually not blessed with an abundance of clean water, Saskatchewan now does not have enough water to service its food-growing agriculture needs.

Second is that while the waste water from fracking can be reused--fracking companies would rather not reuse its own water because its used water has pulled heavy metals out of the ground it fractured--it must be stored in the meantime. Who wants contaminated water stored near their home? Where can you imagine it would be safe to store contaminated water indefinitely? My country, Canada, has water all over its surface, perhaps more than any other country in the world, and we are concerned about leakage that would contaminate our fresh water. Contaminated water in surface water could be used for drinking, but it is also used by countless animals, plants and beneficial microbes that allow food to be grown in the soil.

Even if the waste water from fracking were safe (bear with me, I know it is not), the heavy metals drawn from the ground would make it unsafe. When it comes to water, fracking is a lose-lose situation.

While Nova Scotia has put a moratorium on fracking, waste water from fracking exploration mines in NS still needs to be disposed of. No community in Nova Scotia would allow it to be put into their sewer system. No community in neighbouring New Brunswick would allow it to be put into their sewer system, even when large amounts of money were offered for doing just that by the company involved. International law forbids it from being dumped into the oceans.

How safe can a liquid be if it can't even be dumped into the ocean? Our oceans have two huge garbage patches each larger than small countries, but fracking waste water is not allowed.

Fracking companies, like every mining operation that ever existed in history, will lie through its teeth, swearing it is telling the truth on the grave of its mother. Not a single one of them could ever be trusted. They have done more damage to our planet and its (former, often now extinct) life forms than any other cause.

The University of Toronto Magazine online has an article in its Winter 2015 edition that will explain more about fracking from a political science professor who is as much of an expert on the subject as anyone (given the secrecy that surrounds fracking operations at all levels).
On Shaky Ground | Dale Sproule | Winter 2015 | University of Toronto Magazine
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http://www.magazine.utoronto.ca/leading-edge/on-shaky-ground-dale-sproule-andrea-olive/
