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Press Release

For Immediate Release

Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation responds as key player in research on hydraulic fracturing

A team of independent researchers, led by Dr. Michael Quinn, Mount Royal University, and Dr. Mary-ellen Tyler, University of Calgary, is seeking to explore prevention and mitigation strategies to address impacts of hydraulic fracturing on Aboriginal communities, and has approached Qalipu to participate in an advisory capacity. Brendan Sheppard, Chief of the Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation Band, has appointed Qalipu's CEO, Annie Randell, to go forward as an advisor and key player on the proposed interdisciplinary research team.

The overall purpose of the research is to explore prevention and mitigation of threats to Aboriginal community health including the avoidance of environmental and cultural harm. In addition, the research will explore opportunities for enhanced social-ecological resilience in the face of resource development associated with petroleum extraction that includes hydraulic fracturing. Project leads have identified a national team of 26 key players with expertise in areas such as natural and social sciences, and public and environmental health. A number of First Nations groups will assume expert roles as well as participate as advisors and community liaisons to effectively build modern scientific research using the knowledge and culture of Indigenous peoples.

"Over the past several years, Qalipu has been approached by a number of companies interested in oil development on the west coast of Newfoundland. While Qalipu recognizes that oil development in the region may bring economic diversification and much needed employment, the main concern for Qalipu is that the health of our communities is not negatively impacted. When the request for our participation on a national research team looking to address the impacts of hydraulic fracturing on Aboriginal communities came across my desk, it was an easy answer. Yes, we want to educate ourselves." Chief Sheppard said.

Chief Sheppard added that the Band looks forward to the learning opportunity and, will continue to be proactive in its pursuit of knowledge on the controversial practice of hydraulic fracturing. In addition to participating in this research project, Qalipu will participate in the upcoming NL Fracking Review Panel public consultations.

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