

After relaying my frustration and concerns to neighbours and friends, I have found that other companies have been very cooperative with extra testing, but that EnCana has not. I also heard that EnCana refused to do the same tests for a landowner near Hussar. Have others had the same or a similar experience? Have they requested these tests? Have they been refused? Why would EnCana not want as much information as possible about these water wells?

At the end of the day, one has to ask, what is EnCana afraid of? And if they are not afraid, why won't they allow me to have the tests done, at my expense but be recorded on their records?

Bill Barnett,  
Strathmore, AB

Published in the Red Deer Advocate, Drumheller Valley Times, Strathmore Standard and other papers.

August 7, 2007

Letter to the Editor

Why is EnCana not willing to test our water beyond the minimum standards?

I am a member of the Wheatland Surface Rights Action Group (WSRAG) and have been since it started up in 2001. WSRAG has tried to be pro-active with information so that landowners can make good decisions when energy companies want on the land. In particular members have been concerned about the effect of hundreds of CBM wells being drilled and fractured and the effects on our water wells. There have been many stories as to damage caused by the energy companies and WSRAG wanted to ensure that we minimized the likelihood here, or at least be able to prove or disprove who is at fault if a water well fails.

WSRAG hired an independent hydro-geologist, Alan McCann from Edmonton, to study the area and to give us his opinion on what we needed to do to protect our water wells and to be able to identify who may be responsible if there are changes or damages in the future. He has a written report (copied to EnCana) with a list of tests and procedures that help us protect our asset of water. This list also included recommendations that landowners should follow.

EnCana wants to drill a well on land next to me. They came and asked permission to test my water wells, which I granted. I also asked them if they would take two extra water samples; for Barium and Strontium (as recommended by Alan McCann) and also test for dissolved gas. EnCana gave me a flat answer of "NO". They would only follow the AB Environment standards (which I and others believe are not stringent enough), and if I did not agree to that, they would not perform the tests at all, and note that I had refused the testing.

I thought perhaps my information may be out of date so I called Alan McCann, who told me that his suggestions were current and strongly advised, as they will help to identify who may be responsible or what may have caused future water problems, if there are any.

EnCana sent someone from Komex to do the testing, and I asked their employee if he could take the extra two water samples suggested by McCann, and I would pay for them from my own pocket. He told me it would be no problem. We discussed costs and I gave him an address for invoicing.

Imagine my surprise – at the end of the day – after he had packed up all of his equipment, when he told me that he had relayed my requests for the extra sampling to his boss (who reports to EnCana) and was advised that he was not permitted to take the extra water samples.... Even if I was the one paying for them! I had been in close proximity to the testing site all day – yet the young fellow was reluctant to come and tell me prior to his shutting down the testing site. What was he or his supervisor afraid of? Me? I'm just a farmer. EnCana?

A long story short – I had to ask an independent person to come back and open the wells to take samples of Barium and Strontium and send them to the labs. I will have the results sent to EnCana and AB Environment. Will EnCana recognize these samples as valid if there is a future problem? I doubt it, there was a reason they did not want to have these samples included in the first place. Was it because they could pin point responsibility in the future? I don't know.

After relaying my frustration and concerns to neighbours and friends, I have found that other companies have been very cooperative with extra testing, but that EnCana has not. I also heard that EnCana refused to do the same tests for a landowner near Hussar. Have others had the same or a similar experience? Have they requested these tests? Have they been refused? Why would EnCana not want as much information as possible about these water wells?

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## YOUR OPINIONS

# Dissolved methane test needs to be conducted on farms

Thank you for printing Bill Barnett's letter (Oct 10, 2007) regarding his request to have the level of dissolved methane in his water measured.

I would like to expand on the importance of his letter to provide further context for the issue it addresses.

The Alberta govern-

ment requires that companies intending to drill cbm wells above the Base of Groundwater Protection must first fulfill the Governments' Baseline Testing Standard.

With regard to methane in groundwater, Baseline Testing requires only the answer to this question: Is methane pres-

ent or not? To answer this question EnCana's consultants typically conduct a compositional analysis of the gas releasing freely from groundwater. It is measured as a percentage.

As an example we know that air is approximately 78% nitrogen, 20% oxygen and 2% other gases which contain 0.0002% methane. If the gas collected from the water has this composition we can assume that there are air bubbles in the water.

We still won't know how much air there is, but we will know air is present. The presence of methane can be detected in air.

The free gas analysis conducted by EnCana has sometimes been referred to by government and industry as a dissolved methane test but this is misleading as it is not the same thing.

Compositional analysis gives no measure of how much methane is actually dissolved in the water. A dissolved methane test gives a measure of concentration in mg/l. You know exactly

how much methane is in one liter of water. It is simpler, less time consuming and less expensive to conduct a dissolved methane test than to complete a free gas assay. EnCana's consultant's compositional gas analysis meets Alberta Environment's requirement but not necessarily the needs of the landowner.

Like Mr. Barnett, I also requested that EnCana take a sample of my water for dissolved methane analysis.

They declined. I offered to personally pay any and all expenses in order for this to be recorded. They refused. EnCana stated that this test is not required by the government's Baseline Testing Standard. They are correct. They are within their rights and legal obligations to refuse. The landowner has no right to insist or require further testing they are willing to pay for.

Undeterred, I personally had several dissolved methane samples collected by a professional scientist. They have been analyzed

by an accredited laboratory in Calgary. I sent the results to the present Alberta government.

This government refused my results along with my request to open a public registry for landowners and residents who wish to have the levels of dissolved methane in their water officially recorded. Our elected government's serious concern and expressed desire for public participation regarding groundwater protection seems a little weak to me.

I believe that measuring the quantity of methane dissolved in groundwater is the most critical test to perform in order to monitor the potential impacts of methane migration as a consequence of unconventional gas drilling. I want quantifiable, reproducible data, not stories of what happened to someone else, somewhere else in the old days. At this point in time EnCana and the government do not support collecting data on dissolved methane and actively take steps to avoid it as part of a

proactive protection policy for public safety.

In much of the United States where cbm has been developed, public safety standards for dissolved methane levels are in place to protect health and safety of because of the well documented, associated dangers of methane migration from gas producing operations.

Our government seems to realize that if no pertinent measurements are taken we will have no record or evidence of problems.

If the United States government had refused their responsibilities and not bothered to create public safety standards for levels of dissolved methane in drinking water there would have been no embarrassing fines issued to EnCana for contaminating groundwater aquifers.

Makes you wonder who creates policy in Alberta, doesn't it?

Sincerely,  
Fiona Lauridsen  
Rosebud, AB



Grade 9 student Joanna Koopmans won the award for Outstanding Achievement in Industrial Arts at the Drumheller Composite High School junior high awards ceremony for the 2006-2007 school year on Oct. 24. Missing: Mitch Smith and Jordan Eans who also won the IA award. Valley Times photo by Isabell Redding



### Bridge the Gap with the Alberta Farm Recovery Plan

With the help of Agriculture Financial Services Corporation and the Alberta Farm Recovery Plan you can receive transitional, short-term assistance to help offset the rising cost of fuel, feed and fertilizer.

**Apply before December 31, 2007**

If you're already protected under the 2006 CAIS program, you will automatically be included in AFRP. If you do not participate in CAIS, call 1.877.744.7900 today to register for the Alberta Farm Recovery Plan before the December 31st deadline.

"As a producer, The Alberta Farm Recovery Plan will help me adjust to the rising costs of fuel, feed and fertilizer" - Norm

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## Not even tasers will stop criminals

When we were kids on an Abbotsford farm, We'd play with guns, but they did no harm.

Cop's and Robbers was the game - with a broom stick handle, we would aim.

We'd run after the bad guy - like the wind - there wasn't an outlaw we couldn't apprehend.

When the "bad guy" came from behind a tree, "fear" was a word that meant nothing to me.

I'd pull my broomstick and yell "POW"! He'd drop like a feather - I didn't know how.

It's all "pretend". He

would get up - and then - We'd start the game all over again.

And now... My son's a fireman - not a cop, because these days the criminals are always on top.

No search warrants, no guns, no wire tap... the bad guy...he just gets a slap.

TASERS that police cannot use.

The Criminal has nothing to lose.

If police touch him - all HELL breaks loose.

The world will know of POLICE ABUSE!

Just like the game of let's pretend,

the policeman's day has the same end.

In real life - history is repeated. All punishment is deleted.

For years the cops will hunt a guy, it goes to court - and we don't know why?

Guilty! Jail! No parole!

- And THEN There he is on the street AGAIN.

"Let's do it all over again".

YOU be the judge, PLEASE!

Don Warkentin  
Mission, B.C.

## Time to get the YCJA changed

Once again the YCJA (Youth Criminal Justice Act, formerly Young Offender's Act of Canada) has failed to protect Canadians, more specifically children in our own community.

A goal of the YGCA, formerly the YOA, was to reduce the volume of incarceration for young offenders.

One of the key objectives listed under the Act include "special measures for violent offenders that focus on intensive supervision and treatment." In this case those seeking treatment for this offender were told it was not available. How about the supervision part?

Releasing an offender to the supervision of a parent or guardian is completely ineffective unless they are chained at the ankle. It is impossible to watch someone 24-7 and should never be an option in the case of a violent offender! If violent offenders exercise their right to protect identity, should we not protect our citizens by removing this person from public?

News reports have stated that the perpetrator in this case was not mentally capable/stable. Considering up to 80 per cent of young offenders re-offend, a mentally ill violent offender should be placed in a mental institution or secure unit with intensive therapy.

Perhaps the YGCA failed this man. It absolutely failed our children.

If you agree that changes need to be made to this flawed system I would encourage every resident of Drumheller, all ages, to make their voice heard.

Letters or emails can be sent to our Minister of Justice. State what you feel is wrong with this system and what needs to change. Should the age protection be reduced to 16 years old? Should violent offenders be removed from the public and denied the options of supervised guardianship? Make your voice heard and request a response. If you do not receive one in 30 days, mail a second copy. Forward emails to your friends and ask them to do the same. Thousands of voices are hard to ignore. Get angry/frustrated/sad if you must. Then help make a difference!

Send your correspondence to  
Minister of Justice  
The Honourable Robert Douglas Nicholson  
Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada  
284 Wellington Street, Ottawa, Ontario  
Canada K1A 0H8  
Or e-mail: [webadmin@justice.gc.ca](mailto:webadmin@justice.gc.ca)

This letter written by Terra Charmont  
Drumheller, AB