

## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
2011HLTH0109-001661  
Jan. 3, 2012

Ministry of Health

### **Contract for oil and gas public health engagement**

VICTORIA – A contract has been awarded to the Fraser Basin Council (FBC) for the first phase of a human health risk assessment of oil and gas development in northeast British Columbia.

This first phase will consist of a public and stakeholder engagement. Local citizens and interested groups will be able to contribute their concerns and experiences with resource development in British Columbia's northeast.

The full risk assessment will be made up of three phases:

- Phase one: public engagement to inform the scope and terms of reference and identify concerns relating to oil and gas development.
- Phase two: A human health risk assessment based on findings from phase one and a comprehensive scientific review of evidence.
- Phase three: Reporting findings to the Province, stakeholders and the public..

Phase one will help the Province better understand the human health concerns that some have expressed about oil and gas development in B.C., and will help develop recommendations for future action.

Interested parties are encouraged to participate in the public engagement. FBC will meet with:

- Citizens' groups.
- Health professionals.
- Academics.
- Non-profits.
- Representatives from all orders of government, including First Nations.
- Oil and gas industry representatives.
- Other interested parties and individuals in northeast B.C.

A variety of methods for input will be available, including traditional mail and online. More information on the engagement process will be coming from FBC early in the new year.

FBC was awarded the \$100,000 contract following a complete RFP process. The contract is for the first phase of the assessment only, and is scheduled to be completed by March 31, 2012.

## **Quotes:**

### **MLA for Peace River South Blair Lekstrom –**

“As the local MLA for the region I've heard this concern in the past, and while I'm confident that the process is a safe one, this study will let us know if something does need to be changed. I've met personally with many different groups about this and support their request for this review and am looking forward to the results. The majority of the people who live in the region support the oil and gas industry and are looking for information that ensures the health and safety for themselves and their families. I believe this study – which is following through on a commitment made by Premier Clark – will benefit both industry and people living in northeast B.C.”

### **MLA for Peace River North Pat Pimm –**

“It is important that we take the time to carefully consider all public-health aspects related to oil and gas development, and that is just what this study will do.”

### **Fraser Basin Council executive director David Marshall –**

“We are happy to be working with the Province on this project. We have a history of working with a wide variety of interests in different sectors and in different areas of the province. We look forward to reaching out to communities of the Peace to identify the issues of concern.”

## **Quick Facts:**

- Drinking water in B.C. is regulated by the B.C. Drinking Water Protection Act.
- The B.C. Oil and Gas Commission has been regulating oil and gas in the Province for over ten years, and is legislated by the Oil and Gas Activities Act.

## **Learn More:**

Fraser Basin Council website: <http://www.fraserbasin.bc.ca/>

A backgrounder follows.

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# BACKGROUND

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## **About Fraser Basin Council**

Established in 1997, the Fraser Basin Council (FBC) is a non-profit society that advances sustainability in the Fraser River Basin and across B.C. FBC has a collaborative governance structure, led by 38 directors from the four orders of government (federal, provincial, local and First Nations) and also from the private sector and civil society.

The vision of the Fraser Basin Council is for “social well-being supported by a vibrant economy and sustained by a healthy environment.”

In fulfilling that vision, FBC helps others work together on solutions to sustainability issues and conflicts. For more than 14 years, the council has helped facilitate multiple collaborative processes and, with its partners, and worked on diverse sustainability initiatives. These include programs on smart planning for communities, climate change action and adaptation, flood management, air quality, green fleets, healthy watersheds and fisheries, and sustainability reporting and education.

The council frequently serves as an impartial facilitator and a sustainability educator, and also assists with conflict and dispute resolution, applied research and analysis, program co-ordination and secretariat services.

The Fraser Basin Council has five regional offices in the Fraser Basin and two in other parts of British Columbia: Vancouver, Mission, Kamloops, Williams Lake, Prince George, Cranbrook and Victoria.

For more on the council, visit: [www.fraserbasin.bc.ca](http://www.fraserbasin.bc.ca)

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