

Eskom desperate – Alliance against Fracking

The push by Eskom for fracking to proceed in South Africa demonstrates just how desperate the parastatal is to escape the energy mess that it has created for the country.

“We acknowledge the expertise of Eskom chief, Mr Brian Dames to comment on South Africa's energy mix but cannot support his statements (“fracking can be done and as Eskom we firmly believe that it must be done” - Financial Mail 19 September 2013) with respect to fracking. In the light of well documented and increasing global bans, moratoria and restrictions, civil unrest in Latin America, civic action and demonstrations in Europe, a nation-wide resistance in Australia and the extension, by the US EPA of their own investigation into fracking, we cannot find the logic in Mr Dames' position,” the Alliance against Fracking in South Africa, AfriForum and Treasure the Karoo Action Group (TKAG) said.

“Despite the NPC's appetite for shale gas, even commissioner Anton Eberhard acknowledges and points to the potential for natural gas feedstock from sources other than the extreme energy of Karoo shale gas,” says Jonathan Deal, chairperson of TKAG.

The Alliance supports the inclusion of gas into South Africa's energy mix and views offshore natural gas as a viable alternative specifically with regard to the urgency of South Africa's requirements and cost per unit.

“It is trite that the development of shale gas from the Karoo would take a minimum of 12 years - whereas offshore gas can be accessed as soon as Eskom is ready for it. We firmly support the NDP approach to the development of gas infrastructure to make use of immediately accessible sources of the fuel. Our view is that Eskom should embrace this opportunity, pursue renewables even more firmly and avoid a repetition of mistakes such as the BHP Billiton fiasco that is costing South Africans 11.5 billion rand,” Deal added.

“The government has plans for a R1 trillion, 20 year energy plan, which includes a new coal-fired power station, a nuclear facility and fracking. We are worried about government's planning. At every summit or international meeting they pledge on green energy and sustainable development, but these plans don't reflect a greener and more sustainable future,” says Julius Kleynhans, Head of Environmental Affairs at AfriForum.

“We would like to encourage government to seek alternatives and to start spending money on renewable energy projects such as solar energy. Renewable energy is viable, reliable, and ready to go – all that's missing is the political will in South Africa,” Kleynhans added.

“Sources indicate that Germany, which is Europe's biggest economy, already gets 25% of its electricity from renewables, and is aiming for 80% renewable energy by 2050. South Africa must follow in these footsteps to build a green legacy,” Kleynhans said.