

# LIPG conducts Lochend survey

By: [Derek Clouthier](#)

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The Lochend Industry Producers Group (LIPG) is confident the majority of residents who reside in the Lochend area support oil and gas development in their backyard following a survey conducted by the group in May.

According to the survey, 37.5 per cent of respondents said they supported energy projects in the Lochend area, 52.8 per cent said they somewhat supported the effort and 9.7 per cent said they did not support energy exploration in their community.

The LIPG – consisting of Pengrowth Energy, Lightstream Resources, Tamarack Valley Energy and TriOil Resources – is a collection of four energy companies that operate in the Lochend area, located just northeast of Cochrane.

In an email response to the Eagle, LIPG chair Larry Stewart said the purpose of the survey was to gather feedback on topics residents wanted to receive more information on, establish their overall understanding and concerns, including on the development of oil and natural gas by way of hydraulic fracturing (or fracking), awareness of the LIPG and the preferred choice for communications with respect to receiving information and updates on activity in the Lochend area.

Issuing 315 surveys in total, 23 per cent submitted a response (a total of 73); a number that pleases the LIPG.

“It gives us confidence that our neighbours agree that responsible development can take place without putting at risk the rural lifestyle they enjoy,” said Stewart.

One Lochend-area resident, however, is not so sure the LIPG tried as hard as it claimed to reach out to households.

“We did not receive a survey and question the effort made to deliver a survey to us,” said Neille Hawkwood. “An informal survey of our neighbours revealed that none of our

acquaintances in the area received the survey. The suggestion that there were only 16 households which did not receive the survey appears to be an understatement.”

Hawkwood believes the LIPG should not have had any issues contacting her family, as they have had frequent visits from industry representatives and said they are very familiar with her land location and contact information.

Hawkwood also questions the size of the pool who responded to the survey.

“Results of any survey with a 23 per cent return rate does not represent a valid indication of overall opinion,” said Hawkwood. “The suggestion that results of this survey indicate Lochend area residents being ‘on board’ with the oil and gas companies working in the area seems to be a very far stretch of the imagination.”

Another finding of the survey appeared to indicate that Lochend-area residents felt that one of the most credible sources of information on oil and gas development was from regular newsletters from the LIPG.

Stewart clarified that the question – one of eight that were asked – came in two parts. The first being to rate the most and least credible sources of oil and gas information, of which, respondents said their first choice was academic studies, followed by newspaper/radio/TV.

The second part of the question asked how residents wanted to receive information about the LIPG, and this was where newsletters were the preferred choice.

Hawkwood feels there is very little scientific information available to residents on the environmental effects of oil and gas development, specifically the much-debated practice of fracking.

“This is a result of the lack of an independent study and monitoring of these effects,” said Hawkwood, “which we and many of our neighbours believe are devastating.”

A summary of the LIPG survey revealed that respondents’ main concerns were with water protection and usage, followed by traffic volumes, fracking, noise, dust, air quality and seismic activity.

The LIPG donated \$20 to one of four organizations for each survey completed. Cochrane SPCA received \$360, Westbrook School, \$540, 4-H, \$420 and Cochrane High School, \$140. The LIPG donated \$20 to one of four organizations for each survey completed. Cochrane SPCA received \$360, Westbrook School, \$540, 4-H, \$420 and Cochrane High School, \$140.