

I am opposing exempting a portion of the Inyan Kara formation for saltwater disposal purposes. While this aquifer has not been used for a domestic or livestock drinking source yet in western North Dakota, it has been used for watering livestock and has had artesian wells drilled into it in the southeastern part of the state where it is located at a shallower depth.

The statements “The aquifer cannot now and will not in the future serve as a drinking source of water...It is situated at a depth or location which makes recovery of water for drinking water purposes economically or technologically impractical” are presumptive. We should not be controlling the future so much as to contaminate a source of water that may be needed for generations yet to come. It is our responsibility to ensure there is a habitable environment for those future generations. What is considered “economically or technologically impractical” now may not be considered as impractical in the future, if other drinking sources have been contaminated. Drilling through the drinking water source aquifers and injecting saltwater at high pressures is an invite to contamination.

Included in the Aquifer Exemption Draft Record of Decision is the estimated cost to drill a water well into the Inyan Kara. However, the oil companies are already drilling into the Inyan Kara for their disposal wells and are required to have much better casing and construction materials used than a domestic water well, so there should be an actual cost amount available for reviewal. If they are willing to spend huge amounts on drilling a disposal well into the Inyan Kara, it’s entirely possible a future water well may be drilled.

I am not familiar with the quality of water needed for fracking, but instead of using the massive amounts of fresh water that are being used, with a little conditioning, the waters of the Inyan Kara could be used for fracking, preserving the fresh water for domestic use. Past technological advances prove one can never say never.

As stated above, I oppose exempting this aquifer.