Colombian Petroleum Industry Workers Union (USO) joins alliance to stop controversial fracking pilot projects

Published by **Brent Patterson** on April 6, 2021

The USO flag can be seen on the left in a recent protest against fracking in Puerto Wilches.

On April 6, Reuters reported: "Colombia's largest oil union has joined anti-fracking activists to oppose the development of non-conventional energy deposits and demand a quicker transition to renewable energy, campaigners said on Tuesday."

That article adds: "The Petroleum Industry Workers Union (USO) and the Colombia Free from Fracking Alliance said in a joint statement they are joining forces to protect the Magdalena Medio region and the country as a whole from non-conventional exploration."

Union president Edwin Palma says: "The @usofrenteobrero officially enter @ColombiaNoFrack. It joins forces with different social and political organizations in the country to oppose this exploitation technique and advocates an accelerated just energy transition."

Caracol Radio adds: "David Gómez of the National Board of Directors of the Workers' Union, USO, said the alliance aims to reject this form of oil extraction that is detrimental to the environment. [Gómez also] pointed out that from now on they advance legal avenues of action and mobilizations to stop this technique of fracking pilots in Colombia."

That article further reports: "The decision [by USO] was made by the Ecopetrol union after learning that the National Hydrocarbons Agency approved for ExxonMobil to carry out research projects in the municipality of Puerto Wilches."

On March 31, the National Hydrocarbons Agency (ANH) provisionally approved a proposal from ExxonMobil to develop its Platero fracking pilot project in the Magdalena Medio region. A licence is expected to be awarded to them on April 8.

We note with additional concern that Toronto-based Sintana Energy could be partnering with ExxonMobil in this fracking pilot project named Platero.

PBI-Canada is organizing a webinar to be held on Thursday April 29 at 3:30 pm ET (2:30 pm in Colombia) titled: Environmental defenders challenging extractivism in the Magdalena Medio. More details on this will be shared this Thursday.

Tweet from USO president Edwin Palma.

Edwin Palma Egea @PalmaEdwin · 4h

La @usofrenteobrero ingresa oficialmente a @ColombiaNoFrack. Une esfuerzos con distintas organizaciones sociales y políticas del país para oponerse a esta técnica de explotación y aboga por una acelerada transición energética justa.

La USO ingresa a la Alianza Colombia Libre de Fracking

El 30 de marzo de 2021, la Unión Sindical Obrera (USO) y la Alianza Colombia Libre de fracking decidieron formalizar la integración de sus capacidades de movilización, incidencia y comunicación para proteger al Magdalena Medio, y a todo el territorio nacional, de la explotación de yacimientos no convencionales y promover una transición energética justa y democrática.

El ingreso de la USO a la Alianza ocurre de manera simultánea al anuncio irresponsable de la Agencia Nacional de Hidrocarburos de la aprobación a la transnacional Exxon, cuestionada en diferentes países por sus prácticas en detrimento del ambiente, de un segundo proyecto piloto de explotación de yacimientos no convencionales (YNC) por medio de la técnica del fracking impuesto al municipio de Puerto Wilches (Santander). La fructífera unión de la USO y la Alianza será un apoyo decisivo para las y los pobladores y trabajadores de toda la región del Magdalena Medio que se oponen a los proyectos piloto en particular, y a la exploración de YNC en general.

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