

Fracking the Marcellus: *Will PA Be Safe or Sorry?*

Fracking Facts

Hydraulic fracturing is used to recover natural gas from sources such as coal beds and shale gas formations. Shale is sedimentary rock formed by layers of clay.

Fracking fluids, made up of water and chemical additives, are pumped into a geologic formation at extremely high pressures. When the pressure exceeds the rock strength, the fluids open fractures that can extend hundreds feet from the well, releasing gas and fracking fluids.



Source: neighborhoodsofcaston.blogspot.com

Deep Drilling, Deep Pockets

Pennsylvania is one of only eleven states that do not limit on the amount of money that individuals can give to candidates for public office.

The natural gas industry gave over \$2.85 million to political candidates in Pennsylvania between 2001 and March 2010, and it has spent \$4.2 million on lobbying since Pennsylvania began requiring lobbyist reporting in 2007.

Governor Tom Corbett received over \$1,500,000 in campaign contributions from natural gas drilling companies.

Corbett plans to re-open state land to new drilling, increasing drilling on public land from 25 active wells to 10,000 active wells.

Health and Environmental Experts Urge:

Follow the Precautionary Principle on Natural Gas from the Marcellus Shale

Since 2007, Pennsylvania has witnessed a dramatic increase in unconventional development of natural gas from the Marcellus shale formation using high-volume hydraulic fracturing, also called “fracking” or “fracing”. Hydraulic fracturing uses known toxins and carcinogens in fracking fluids, and produces heavy metals and other solid and liquid wastes. According to the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, 1,923 permit violations occurred between January 2008 and December 2010 during the drilling of only about 2,000 wells. Contamination of soil, air, and ground water from the large volumes of fluids and wastes used and produced by unconventional gas development represents a clear health hazard to millions in Pennsylvania and surrounding states. Last year alone, 151 million gallons of inadequately treated toxic wastewater were dumped into rivers and streams. While benefits from the Marcellus Shale may go to those in other states, the health and environmental costs are borne by local residents and ecosystems.

We call upon the government, public and private sector to make necessary investments for research into possible sustainable technology for extracting natural gas. We must take decisive action to protect the health of the people of Pennsylvania and the natural environment of the Commonwealth. When faced with risks of this magnitude, it is imperative to follow the Precautionary Principle: “Where an activity raises threats of harm to the environment or human health, precautionary measures should be taken even if some cause and effect relationships are not fully established scientifically. In this context the proponent of an activity, rather than the public, bears the burden of proof.” We strongly urge you to impose a moratorium on shale fracturing for gas extraction until the following steps have been completed:

- Public disclosure of all chemicals and wastes including quantities used, produced, and stored at every site;
- Completion and publication of the EPA study regarding the safety and health impacts of unconventional gas development using high-volume fracking;
- Completion and publication of an independent cumulative impacts study of unconventional gas development in the Marcellus region; and
- The enactment and strict enforcement of regulations based on the completed studies, sufficient to protect people’s health and the environment, including plans for ecosystem restoration.

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Source: <http://www.dca.com/photos/marcolflagrants/167215762183621653>

Fracking Facts

More than 1.3 billion gallons of wastewater was produced by Pennsylvania wells over the past three years, far more than has been previously disclosed. Most of this water—enough to cover Manhattan in three inches—was sent to treatment plants not equipped to remove many of the toxic materials in drilling waste.

In PA, in the past three years, at least 16 wells whose records showed high levels of radioactivity in their wastewater also reported spills, leaks or failures of pits where hydrofracking fluid or waste is stored, according to state records.

In 2009, Cabot Oil & Gas spilled 8,400 gallons of fracking fluid into Dimock Township, PA creeks and wetlands.



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Waste Pit of Hydro-Fracking Drilling Mud, © 2010 J. Henry Fair