

Dangers of Fracking

So what is fracking? Fracking, or hydraulic fracturing is a process of drilling deep into the earth, past the aquifer and into a layer of shale, then drilling horizontally for thousands of feet, and pumping a mixture of water, sand and chemicals at such high pressure, it fractures the shale and releases the methane gas that's trapped within. Millions of gallons of this fracking fluid is injected into each well. Each well uses millions of gallons of water and 40,000 gallons of chemicals, none of which they are required to disclose, but include arsenic, benzene, formaldehyde, lead, mercury, hydrochloric acid, radium and uranium... The only thing they are prohibited by law from using is diesel fuel.

The fracking industry, thanks to Dick Cheney, is exempt from the Safe Drinking Water Act, and the Clean Air Act and has loopholes in many other laws that were intended to protect us from exactly this kind of threat.

What are the dangers of fracking, in short?

First, only 25-50% of the fracking fluid is recovered. The rest stays in the earth and can slowly seep up into the aquifer over time. The recovered fracking fluid is stored in lined pits, which evaporate and can leak - or it's injected deep into the earth and is suspected of causing over 1000 earthquakes in states which rarely experience them.

2nd, the released methane not captured by the well pump, can rise up towards the surface thru the fissures and into the aquifer - and then into people's wells. Methane is an explosive hazard (meaning your house or the well itself could explode), and it's toxic to humans. In Gasland 2, using a special camera, one can see huge clouds of methane pouring from the fracking wells.

3rd, the fracking drills are encased in cement and according to the gas industry, over 5% of all these cement casings fail immediately and after 30 years, at least 50% will have failed and leaked. So if there are 1000 wells in the county, within 30 years, at least 500 of them will be leaking methane and some undisclosed chemical soup into the ground and into our water.

Especially in a time of drought, diverting water from agriculture to fracking is a really bad idea.

And the health consequences are equally bad and only beginning to be studied. So far, it's been documented to cause low birth weight and an increase in birth defects, nosebleeds, severe headaches, rashes and lung problems. 15 million Americans now live within a mile of a fracking well and one million new wells are planned in the next decade. In Illinois, there is a housing development where many of the homes have fracking wells in their back yards!

We should all be aware that not only will our home owners insurance not cover us, in the event of a fracking "accident", but if you consent to have a well on your property, you can be held personally liable for any damage caused by the fracking operation, once the gas company leaves. A Texas rancher, who has to haul in \$1000 worth of water each month because his well is full of gas, is being sued for defamation by the gas company! So, if we don't stand together to ban fracking, each one of us harmed will have to stand alone and defend ourselves.

Regarding the issue of these ordinances being illegal: We have inalienable rights by virtue of being born human. These rights were not given to us by government, nor can they be taken away - that is why they are called inalienable. The Declaration of Independence states that it is the function of government to protect those rights. Therefore any "law" which takes away our fundamental right to protect the health and safety of our families and communities is an illegitimate law, and we have every right to repudiate these so called "laws" - in fact, I believe it is our duty as human beings to do so, just as our forebears did in 1776. The great American Revolution has been hijacked - mostly by the courts. Isn't it time to stand up and reclaim our fundamental, inalienable Rights? That is what measure S does.