

Maryland Fracking Moratorium Now!

A Resolution Calling for Statutory Protections Against the Dangers of Hydraulic Fracking for Natural Gas in Maryland

BECAUSE: Drilling activity related to hydraulic fracturing—fracking -- has been directly linked to a whole host of harmful effects, including contaminated water wells, increased truck traffic and associated noise and dust pollution, contaminated rivers, forest fragmentation, poor air quality and greenhouse gas emissions; and,

BECAUSE: Disposing of toxic fracking waste poses major risks related to high levels of toxic chemicals such as benzene, naphthalene, arsenic, lead, toluene and strontium that have been found in wastewater; and the *New York Times* found that at least 116 gas wells in Pennsylvania and West Virginia produced wastewater with radiation levels 100 times the US Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) drinking water standard; and,

BECAUSE: The United States Geological Survey's April 2012 report found that deep underground injection of drilling wastewater is the probable cause of a six-fold increase in earthquakes in middle America in 2011 compared to the 20th century levels; the report declared that "a naturally occurring rate change of this magnitude is unprecedented;" and,

BECAUSE: The process of fracking involves the use of hundreds of large trucks per well to transport fracking liquids and water, and those trucks pollute surrounding air, cause damage to roads, create traffic congestion and noise and other negative impacts; and,

BECAUSE: The EPA and researchers at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), in addition to others, have conducted studies showing significant releases of methane -- a greenhouse gas many times more powerful than carbon dioxide -- during the process of hydraulic fracturing that far exceed gas industry claims; and,

BECAUSE: The widely respected International Energy Agency (IEA) has reported that a worldwide upsurge in the use of natural gas -- including fracked gas -- could lead to an enormous six-degree Fahrenheit increase in average global temperatures; and,

BECAUSE : To date, there have been no fracking wells drilled in Maryland, but a huge amount of western Maryland land has been leased by companies whose intention is to bring the fracking industry here; and,

BECAUSE: An executive order issued by Maryland Governor O'Malley has delayed drilling until a special commission can determine if fracking can be conducted safely, but the commission lacks the funding it needs to underwrite a range of studies to that effect and the oil and gas industry has blocked attempts to legislatively ensure reasonable funding for such studies; and,

BECAUSE: It is time for the policy of the state of Maryland to be clarified in the law since, as seen in Pennsylvania, West Virginia and many other states, fracking's broad public health and environmental threats warrant much more thorough study and protection;

THEREFORE: We the undersigned organizations (civic, business, religious, public health, environmental and others) call upon the state of Maryland to enact an immediate statutory moratorium on hydraulic fracturing in the state. This statutory moratorium should only be permitted to expire if and when detailed and transparent studies prove that fracking activities will not cause harm to our public health, rural communities, natural environment, and global climate.

Signed:

Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments
Chesapeake Climate Action Network
Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility
Climate Change Initiative of Howard County
Earthworks
Environment Maryland
Interfaith Power & Light (MD.DC.NoVA)
Labor Network for Sustainability
League of Women Voters of Maryland
Maryland League of Conservation Voters
Maryland Sierra Club
Maryland Student Climate Coalition
NAACP Maryland State Conference