EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

Date	HeadLine	Outlet
12/27/2012	EPA Outlines Progress in Study of Risks To Drinking Water From Hydraulic Fracturing	BNA's Daily Environment Report
12/27/2012	EPA releases progress report on fracking study	Denver Post, The
12/27/2012	US EPA fracking progress report reveals little data, no conclusions	Platts
12/27/2012	EPA Scales Back Scope Of Fracking Study, Highlights Data Limitations	Inside EPA Weekly Report
12/27/2012	EPA offers hints on fracking's future	Washington Times
12/27/2012	EPA's CHRISTMAS GIFT - FRACKING REPORT & Interactive Map to View EACH Fracking Well Info	DAILY KOS
12/27/2012	Major EPA Fracking Study Will Tap Into Pennsylvania Data	StateImpact Pennsylvania
12/27/2012	UPDATE 2: EPA's FRACKED UP REPORT - See Interactive Map to View EACH Fracking Well Info	DAILY KOS
12/27/2012	EPA Releases Update on Fracking Study	StateImpact Pennsylvania
12/27/2012	UPDATE 3: EPA's FRACKED UP REPORT - New Pics of Wells on Banks of Missouri River	DAILY KOS
12/27/2012	.com to learn more research is applying particularly conditions	KRLD-AM
12/27/2012	[BLOG] Fracking decisions loom as study declaring it safe is withdrawn	Journal Record - Online, The
12/27/2012	EPA head Jackson to resign post	Washington Post
12/27/2012	fracturing controversial drilling practiced EPA's doing a big study	KPCC-FM (89.3 KPCC)
12/27/2012	EPA releases update on fracking study	Mountain Xpress - Online
12/27/2012	EPA Releases Update on ongoing hydraulic fracturing study.	ThomasNet News
12/27/2012	UPDATED: EPA's FRACKED UP REPORT - See Interactive Map to View EACH Fracking Well Info	DAILY KOS
12/27/2012	Top 10 in Law Blogs : LXBN December 26, 2012	Real Lawyers :: Have Blogs
12/26/2012	The New Robber Barons	Ammoland Shooting Sports News
12/26/2012	In fracking culture war, celebs, billionaires and banjos	Japan Today
12/26/2012	EPA Issues Progress Report On Fracking Study	New York League Of Conservation Voters | Electing For The Environment
12/26/2012	EDITORIAL: California must insist on full disclosure of chemicals used in oil and gas 'fracking' [The Sacramento Bee]	Equities.com
12/26/2012	EPA Releases Progress Report on Hydraulic Fracturing Study	Valve Magazine - Online
12/26/2012	The New Robber Barons	New Media Journal
12/26/2012	2012 Texas Air Quality: A Year In Review	Environmental Defense Solutions - Online
12/26/2012	EPA study seen as soft on fracking	Hartford Business Journal - Online
12/26/2012	EPA study seen as soft on fracking |	Hartford Business Journal - Online

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12/26/2012	Hollywood films take on fracking	MSN.co.in
12/26/2012	EPA Releases Update On Ongoing Hydraulic Fracturing Study	Water Online
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12/26/2012	EPA releases update on ongoing hydraulic fracturing study	Floyd County Times - Online
12/25/2012	INHOFE REACTS TO EPA'S HYDRAULIC FRACTURING PROGRESS REPORT	Bignews.biz
12/25/2012	INSIGHT-In fracking culture war, celebs, billionaires and banjos	CNBC - Online
12/25/2012	FACTBOX-U.S. EPA studies five ways fracking may affect water	CNBC - Online
12/25/2012	*UPDATED* EPA Progress Report on Hydraulic Fracturing Reveals Obvious, Little Else	NorthCentralPA.com
12/25/2012	Fracking war comes to Hollywood	Arab Times
12/25/2012	Insight: In fracking culture war, celebs, billionaires and banjos	Reuters - Online
12/25/2012	Here's Every County In The Country That's Getting Fracked	Business Insider
12/25/2012	In fracking culture war, celebs, billionaires and banjos	Utility Products Magazine - Online
12/24/2012	In fracking culture war, celebs, billionaires and banjos	Electric Light and Power
12/24/2012	EPA's CHRISTMAS GIFT - FRACKING REPORT & Interactive Map to View EACH Fracking Well Info	DAILY KOS
12/24/2012	Latest Pennsylvania business	WCBD-TV - Online
12/24/2012	New films to highlight fight over fracking by oil firms, environmentalists	MSN
12/24/2012	Here's Every County In The Country That's Getting Fracked [Map]	Business Insider
12/24/2012	Promised Land reignites fracking war starring celebrities, billionaires and banjos	Financial Post - Online
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12/24/2012	Latest Pennsylvania business	WJTV-TV - Online
12/24/2012	Insight: In fracking culture war, celebs, billionaires and banjos	Consumer Electronics Net
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12/24/2012	Insight: In fracking culture war, celebs, billionaires and banjos	Reuters India
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12/24/2012	Members of the the Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance of the European Parliament hold leaflets with the slogan stop fracking as they demonstrate against shale gas during a voting session at the European Parliament in Strasbourg	Yahoo! Malaysia, News
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12/22/2012	EPA study seen as soft on fracking	WCTI-TV - Online
12/22/2012	BLOG: Ohio Utica Shale: Eco-group supports more EPA research on fracking	Akron Beacon Journal, The
12/22/2012	EPA fracking study picks 3 Wise sites	Fort Worth Star-Telegram
12/22/2012	Here is the latest Pennsylvania news from The Associated Press	Associated Press (AP) - Harrisburg Bureau
12/22/2012	Latest Pennsylvania news, sports, business and entertainment	Associated Press (AP) - Harrisburg Bureau
12/22/2012	Latest West Virginia news, sports, business and entertainment	Associated Press (AP) - Charleston, WV Bureau
12/22/2012	Latest Wyoming news, sports, business and entertainment	Associated Press (AP) - Cheyenne Bureau

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

EPA Outlines Progress in Study of Risks To Drinking Water From Hydraulic Fracturing BNA's Daily Environment Report

12/27/2012

The Environmental Protection Agency issued a progress report Dec. 21 on its study of the risks posed by hydraulic fracturing to drinking water resources.

The progress report outlined research efforts made as of September and noted that the study does not offer even preliminary results at this stage.

"Information presented as part of this report cannot be used to draw conclusions about potential impacts to drinking water resources from hydraulic fracturing," according to the Study of the Potential Impacts of Hydraulic Fracturing on Drinking Water Resources: Progress Report.

It may be another two years before the EPA study can offer results in a final, peer-reviewed synthesis to address concerns about the well stimulation technique used commonly to produce oil or natural gas, especially shale gas, the progress report indicated.

The report said extensive data has been obtained, with more to come. The projects yet to be started include "prospective" case studies at sites where hydraulic fracturing will begin after the research starts, "which allows sampling and characterization of the site before, during, and after drilling, injection of the fracturing fluid, flowback, and production," the report said.

"The EPA continues to work with industry partners to design and develop prospective case studies," the report said.

EPA Pulls Together Data

For retrospective case studies, two rounds of sampling have been completed at five case study sites, in Colorado, North Dakota, Texas, and Pennsylvania. That work has included collection of water samples from more than 70 domestic water wells, 15 monitoring wells, and 13 surface water sources.

The report said information on chemicals and practices used in fracturing was provided by nine fracturing service companies. In addition, 333 well files were supplied by nine oil and gas operators, more than 12,000 chemical disclosure records were obtained from the website FracFocus—maintained by the Ground Water Protection Council and the Interstate Oil and Gas Compact Commission—and spill reports were obtained from state databases in Colorado, New Mexico, and Pennsylvania, as well as a federal database.

Hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, forces water, sand, and chemical additives into geologic layers to create fractures through which oil or gas can flow. The chemicals especially have worried people who fear contamination of drinking water, although concerns derive from the potential movement of naturally occurring chemicals that could pollute water.

The progress report included an appendix listing more than 1,000 chemicals "reportedly used" in hydraulic fracturing and chemicals found in flowback and produced water.

The listed chemicals run the gamut of what is normally found in oil and natural gas, including overlapping generic labels such as "petroleum hydrocarbons" and sand, brown sand, and white sand.

Computer Models, Study Time Frames

The report highlighted the use of computer models to identify "hypothetical, but realistic, scenarios pertaining to the water acquisition, well injection, and wastewater treatment and waste disposal stages of the water cycle."

It said "complex computer models" were being used to explore the possibility of subsurface gas and fluid migration from deep shale formations to overlying aquifers in six scenarios.

The report said research results will be released in draft form in late 2014 for review by the public and the EPA Science Advisory Board. It gave no time frame for completion of a report after peer review. In addition, it said, "Results from individual research projects will undergo peer review prior to publication either as articles in scientific journals or EPA reports."

The original plan for the study, released in 2011, envisioned the release of preliminary results in 2012 and a final synthesis in 2014, although science advisers warned EPA that the plan was overly ambitious for such time frames.

More recently, EPA began publicly abandoning the idea of reporting results in 2012, preliminary or not (218 DEN A-2, 11/13/12).

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EPA releases progress report on fracking study
Denver Post, The

12/27/2012

WASHINGTON—The Environmental Protection Agency has released a progress report on its research into potential impacts of natural gas hydraulic fracturing and drilling on drinking water.
The update released Friday doesn't come to any conclusions and the final report won't be released until 2014.
The EPA says information on fracking chemicals has been collected from nine companies and 24,925 wells. Computer analysis is also being done on well construction.
The EPA says it is working with scientists, the industry, and environmental groups to examine any possible impacts.
Sampling at five locations in Colorado, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, and Texas has been completed, and lab studies are being done on drilling wastewater.
The industry and many states say the process is safe when done properly, but critics dispute that.
Online: http://www.epa.gov/hfstudy/

Read more: EPA releases progress report on fracking study - The Denver Post
http://www.denverpost.com/breakingnews/ci_22240523/epa-releases- progress-report-fracking-study#ixzz2GHNScFvf
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US EPA fracking progress report reveals little data, no conclusions
Platts

12/27/2012

The US Environmental Protection Agency said it has analyzed water samples from four shale plays across the country, but released no test results or preliminary conclusions Friday when it issued a progress report on its investigation of the effects of hydraulic fracturing on drinking water.

Commissioned by a Democratically-controlled Congress in 2010, EPA's investigation is studying the impacts of fracking on drinking water through the entire "life-cycle" of water use in shale oil and shale gas extraction, from its acquisition and withdrawal through injection via fracking to its disposal.

Friday's progress report outlined the 18 separate research projects -- including five local studies -- that EPA is conducting with regards to fracking and drinking water but gave no indication as to what its investigation may have found thus far.

"Information presented as part of this report cannot be used to draw conclusions about the potential impacts to drinking water resources from hydraulic fracturing," the EPA said.

The EPA did note two major modifications to the study from its original design. The first is the inclusion of data from FracFocus, the voluntary fracturing database set up by the Groundwater Protection Council, the Interstate Oil & Gas Commission and the oil and gas industry. EPA said that in many cases FracFocus' data is more accurate geographically and more up-to-date on the chemicals being used.

The EPA also decided not to investigate the phenomena of naturally occurring radioactive materials being unearthed by high pressure fracking and traveling to the surface. That activity is already being investigated by the US Department of Energy and several universities, EPA said, and the agency will rely on those studies to reach any conclusions.

EPA noted in its progress report that it had completed two rounds of water sampling and was preparing to undertake a third in the coming year before it issues a final report in 2014.

In addition to the sampling, EPA said it was running computer simulations of how rock fractures to determine if fracking can contaminate shallow aquifers or open lines of communication between the deeper well bores and shallower water aquifers.

Four of the five locations for water sampling are in shale plays: Dunn County, North Dakota (Bakken); Wise County, Texas (Barnett), and Bradford and Washington Counties, Pennsylvania (Marcellus).

All four were chosen because the location saw a well blowout that leaked fracking fluids or because of homeowner complaints that the quality of the water from their drinking water wells had declined.

A fifth location, Colorado's Las Animas and Huerfano counties, is in the Raton Basin coalbed methane play.

--Bill Holland, bill_holland@platts.com --Edited by Keiron Greenhalgh, keiron_greenhalgh@platts.com

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EPA Scales Back Scope Of Fracking Study, Highlights Data Limitations
Inside EPA Weekly Report

12/27/2012

EPA has scaled back some aspects of its massive study on potential drinking water impacts associated with hydraulic fracturing, dropping plans to assess possible adverse effects of interactions between fracking fluids and naturally occurring materials in subsurface shale plays and conducting toxicity testing of fracking chemicals.

The agency is also pointing to limitations on some of the data it had planned to assess as part of the study, including difficulty in pinpointing locations in the country where large scale water withdrawals and wastewater treatment processes could impact environmental justice communities.

However, while the agency has made several minor changes slightly narrowing the parameters of its research efforts, one industry source notes that in other respects, "the study continues to expand beyond issues that are fracturing."

For example, the source says that a sizable part of the planned analysis appears to be devoted to analyzing risks from produced water, or wastewater generated from the extraction process and often containing high levels of brine, although produced water results from all forms of oil and gas drilling and therefore is not unique to fracking. "A significant portion of this study seems to be directed toward assessing the management of produced water using the tenuous argument that fracturing allows the development of the resource," that source says.

The agency Dec. 21 released a report, "Study of the Potential Impacts of Hydraulic Fracturing on Drinking Water Resources: Progress Report," which provides an interim update on its two-year research effort aimed at assessing risks of fracking from various phases of the water cycle.

EPA's Office of Research and Development and Office of Water jointly launched the study last year, spurred by a request in the agency's 2010 appropriations bill that the agency examine the possible adverse effects of fracking on drinking water. The study consists of retrospective and prospective case studies aimed at examining actual fracking operations for potential impacts, literature reviews, toxicity assessments and scenario evaluations for the water lifecycle of fracking.

Fracking critics hope the study, slated for completion in 2014, will conclude that the controversial process endangers drinking water, lending support to legislative efforts to strictly regulate the process. But industry and congressional Republicans have raised concerns about EPA's methodology for conducting the research, such as how the agency plans to ensure that technological advancements in the field of fracking are accurately reflected in the study.

In the 278-page report, EPA avoids drawing any conclusions about potential impacts to drinking water supplies from fracking. But the agency outlines several changes it has made in its approach from its final November 2011 study plan.

Those changes include dropping one planned prospective case study in Louisiana's Haynesville Shale due to scheduling conflicts, opting not to conduct toxicological screening of fracking chemicals, and eliminating research questions aimed at assessing how fracking chemicals react once injected into subsurface shale formations.

The agency acknowledges that it likely will not have any prospective case study results in time to meet its 2014 target, and expects to release findings after its 2014 final report.

Further, while EPA as part of the study is compiling chemical, physical and toxicological profiles of common fracking chemicals, it will not conduct high-throughput screening analysis of these chemicals using its computational toxicology program, as outlined in the study plan. The change reflects suggestions made by EPA's Science Advisory Board panel

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when it reviewed the draft study plan last year, although some chartered SAB members argued that the toxicity testing was key to publishing health research and should be part of the study.

Evaluating Toxicity Data

EPA says in the progress report that while it will not conduct the high throughput screening assays "at this time," it "will continue efforts to identify, evaluate, and prioritize existing toxicity data."

The agency also is withdrawing two research questions from its analysis, given that the Department of Energy is already conducting its own study of whether fracking chemicals interact within various rock formations, the progress report says. "The EPA continues to believe in the importance of research to address questions associated with this project, but has decided to rely upon work being conducted by another federal agency," the agency says.

EPA is withdrawing the questions "How might hydraulic fracturing fluids change the fate and transport of substances in the subsurface though geochemical interactions?" and "What are the chemical, physical, and toxicological properties of substances in the subsurface that may be released by hydraulic fracturing operations?"

And EPA is highlighting some data limitations, such as difficulty in identifying environmental justice communities impacted by high volume water withdrawals and inadequate treatment of fracking wastewater, potential under-reporting of spill incidents at fracking sites and variations in state reporting requirements. "This makes it difficult to categorize reported spills as hydraulic fracturing-related and to comprehensively identify the causes, chemical identity, and volumes of hydraulic fracturing-related spills," EPA says. The agency plans to host the first of a series of public workshops on the study on Jan. 8, 2013. -- Bridget DiCosmo (bdicosmo@iwpnews.com)

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

EPA offers hints on fracking's future
Washington Times

12/27/2012

The Obama administration has pulled back the curtain on its long-awaited study of the possible correlation between water pollution and fracking, but the full results and definitive findings of its far-reaching report won't be released until 2014.
The review, the most sweeping federal survey to date, likely will have major implications for the country's natural gas and oil boom spurred by hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, which has transformed the U.S. fuel market and is reshaping the global energy landscape.
The Environmental Protection Agency offered a "progress report" on its broad, multifaceted study, which includes data gathered from hundreds of natural gas and oil wells across the U.S.
The agency in 2010 was charged by Congress to examine fracking, which uses water, sand and chemical mixtures to crack underground rock and release previously inaccessible reserves of natural gas and other fuels.
The boom from fracking has transformed local economies in Pennsylvania, North Dakota and elsewhere, and it has put the nation on track to become energy-independent in a stunningly short period of time.
"More jobs are being created. Imports are down. And more revenue is being sent to government. Continuation of this trend is vital to America's economic recovery and long-term prosperity," said Rayola Dougher, senior economic adviser with the American Petroleum Institute. "However, the right government policies will be important to facilitating this."
The ongoing EPA study is set to become the cornerstone of future federal fracking policies, yet many congressional Republicans and oil and gas industry leaders remain leery of the science behind the government's probe.
The White House and several governors have come under increasing pressure from environmental groups to ban or greatly limit the practice, and some fear the EPA report will become justification for those steps.
In its progress report, the EPA explains how it is examining five major areas of the fracking "water cycle." They are: the impact of large water withdrawals, necessary to perform fracking; the possible impacts of fracking fluid surface spills and how they would affect drinking-water resources; the implications of "injection and fracturing process" on drinking-water resources; how "flowback" — wastewater generated by fracking — could affect water supplies; and the possible effects of inadequate treatment of fracking wastewater.
The EPA is conducting case studies at well sites in Colorado, North Dakota, Pennsylvania and Texas. So far, the agency has collected samples from 70 domestic water wells, 15 monitoring wells and 13 surface water sources. It also is looking at "information on chemicals and practices" from a number of oil and gas companies, and it is evaluating "well construction and fracturing records" provided by operators for 333 oil and gas wells across the U.S.
The study, the agency said, will undergo rigorous and independent peer review before being completed.
In the meantime, oil and gas industry leaders must confront the swelling tide of negative publicity surrounding fracking. The practice has drawn the attention of many musicians, movie stars and other celebrities who want to see it banned entirely.
Fracking is "toxic and stupid" and "it has to be stopped," actress and activist Mariel Hemingway, said at an October rally in Colorado, which is engaged in a heated debate over the future of fracking in the state "All of us are a community that needs to make a stand."
It also is the subject of a new film, "Promised Land," which depicts the process in a highly negative light.
That attention, combined with the potential that the EPA will indict fracking in its final report, require a strong response from the oil and gas sector.
"I think we've got a major education project to do," Tim Wigley, president of the Western Energy Alliance, told the Washington Times.

Read more: http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2012/dec/23/epa-offers-hints -on-frackings-future/#ixzz2GHK53wb4
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12/27/2012

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

Major EPA Fracking Study Will Tap Into Pennsylvania Data
StateImpact Pennsylvania

12/27/2012

A major Environmental Protection Agency report on natural gas drilling will include a lot of information from Pennsylvania.

The federal study won't be released until 2014, but the agency recently published a progress report. The EPA is examining five stages of hydraulic fracturing, and assessing each step's risk of contaminating drinking water. That includes everything from where drillers withdraw their water, to what chemicals they mix in, to how fracking fluid is stored on drilling sites. The study will also probe well construction standards and waste disposal methods.

The study includes an extensive look at drilling in Bradford and Washington Counties. The EPA is also looking at spill data from Pennsylvania drilling sites, and using computer models to predict how much water will be withdrawn from the Susquehanna River Basin in the future.

Keep reading for a look inside the EPA's progress report. We've annotated the document to flag the highlights, as well as the Pennsylvania-specific information.

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

UPDATE 2: EPA's FRACKED UP REPORT - See Interactive Map to View EACH Fracking Well Info
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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

EPA Releases Update on Fracking Study
StateImpact Pennsylvania

12/27/2012

The Environmental Protection Agency has released new information about its ongoing review of hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, and the impact on drinking water. Today's report does not include any conclusions, but outlines the research process and timeline. The EPA study examines the entire drilling process, not just fracking. The Agency has broken up the process into five stages; including water withdrawals, frack water spills (which include chemicals used in the process), the injection and fracturing process, wastewater spills, and wastewater treatment and disposal.

The research will also look at impacts of poor well construction and the potential hazards posed by nearby wells, natural fractures, and the toxicity of chemicals used in the process. Two of the five case study locations are in Pennsylvania, one in Bradford County, and another in Washington County. Although the study focuses on fracking in shale formations, the EPA is also reviewing oil and gas fracking in tight sands and coalbeds.

The EPA says the results will not be published until the end of 2014. Before that, the research will be subject to a "Highly Influential Scientific Assessment," meaning an independent, external board will conduct a peer review.

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UPDATE 3: EPA's FRACKED UP REPORT - New Pics of Wells on Banks of Missouri River DAILY KOS

12/27/2012

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NORTH DAKOTA - The EPA study doesn't include much about North Dakota where there is a huge fracking boom with a lot of wells near the Missouri River and its reservoirs. You might remember that, in 2011, the Missouri River underwent historic flooding. You would think the flooding potential would translate into NO FRACKING WELLS near the Missouri River. Not so.

The nine companies contributing data to the EPA for its study does not include the companies drilling fracking sites in North Dakota near the banks of the Missouri River for some reason.

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.com to learn more research is applying particularly conditions
KRLD-AM

12/27/2012

nine each additional line with unlimited contacts that I is available immediately canonized . my .com to learn more research is applying particularly conditions everything I cannot accompany counseling and felt utterly mounting location are you concerned about how the fiscal clip will affect your financial help the decisions you make right now could affect you for the rest of your life so what you do I discuss Sam's I know a person who can help you his name is Todd Baldwin to work with you right now one-on-one you won't be just a number to Todd Daniel wash the most important numbers for you your money whether it is defensive strategies were seven percent solution I suggest you go to Todd Baldwin .com that's Todd Volkman .com life is short protect what's yours and be prepared for what's , though for you since you came and we have seen magnificent Basque or knowing an analysis is simply a process of reasoning is also regional programs for worse favorites , although tickets are twenty nine dollars seven a New Year's Eve Symphony Orchestra and thirty one seven six six five six oh or that you simply go him and him and him and he is also responsible for your mentor Nathan is selective service is Joseph Collins loans government jobs and job training for is : www. SSS for you and him and the selective service registration card . you may register traffic and weather together on the eggs NewsRadio telling . our only him eleven thirty eight and the late Philip during any event ate it brought in by all a entity I am ranking back again) University Drive Reich went to get El Dorado Parkway down in Fort Worth on thirty five W countdown between two eighty seven indicator , unbound Western Center Boulevard Wexford of traffic and Northwood eight twenty eight and holiday blame the rain clouds in North Richland Hills can you get rewarded for driving safely deal with Allstate don't think you attack him now like the year every year you don't have any " tattooing Allstate agent K are you in good hands with trafficking letter together on the eighth next report at eleven forty eight and Julie Machen near traffic and LLC him uncharted hike out today - twenty six obviously five then becoming mostly cloudy tonight there is a dense fog enveloping five morning photo thirty five fall early Fridays and partly cloudy cold front will arrive time and there may be a couple showers mainly to our East title forty six colder Friday night low twenty seven sunshine nice Saturday with cool five forty seven Sony early on Sunday than increasing clout showers move it on Monday and I think the lobby around for New Year's Eve and New Year's Day mode New Year's Eve bout thirty eight I New Year's Day murder of forty five □ Carol the chief meteorologist Hawkins regards any degrees in Plano thirty five and Ford were thirty two degrees feels like twenty five year tenure holding him hello for you and I live in the boiling oil and gas newscenter the head of the EPA is stepping down very bad not all looks at Lisa Jackson's record Jackson forced new regulations on coal burning power plants and pushed through strict new fuel efficiency standards for cars and light trucks reference < zoo complaint regency was stifling job development she has however supported hydraulic fracturing or fronting the controversial natural gas extraction method that's creating a boom in many areas over the objections of the environmentalist meantime stay taxes has been in conflict with Lisa Johnson four years loot next moved Metzger is with the activist group environment Texas and he spoke much car repair or murder are in Europe ever are Arab to what a great group . our target group equality air water and that verily are your hours are allowed to them you got brought in regards to you all but one that is our Redeemer would power plant improving the door but you are brought in for cover art would impair our wire whipping your anger with Mark . that some lowly are much better error water or Bernard R Rahman is used as you will be I It is the way of the coal-fired plants in your diesel mix oil pipeline

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

[BLOG] Fracking decisions loom as study declaring it safe is withdrawn
Journal Record - Online, The

12/27/2012

A study hailed as clearing the reputation of the oil-extraction method known as fracking has ended up muddying the reputation of the scientist who oversaw it, and thrown a shadow on optimistic forecasts about the nation's energy prospects.

Chip Groat of the University of Texas at Austin's Energy Institute (photo: NPR State Impact)

Chip Groat, of the University of Texas at Austin's Energy Institute, who was identified as Principal Investigator in the widely publicized study, has retired after a scandal that both devastated the study's credibility and renewed questions about whether fracking contaminates groundwater, questions to which the study seemed to answer: no.

When he worked on the study, Groat was a director for, and held stock in, Plains Exploration & Production Co., a publicly traded oil and gas company that used fracking, a fact that neither the Energy Institute nor the news media that covered the study knew when it was issued in February 2012. Groat was also the institute's assistant director.

The word fracking is a catchy diminutive for the bulky phrase "hydraulic fracturing," a process of pumping water-and-chemical cocktails into underground rock to free oil and gas deposits.

Despite the uncovering of Groat's connections to the oil and gas company, leaders in that industry continue to express confidence that the widely used fracking process will lead the U.S. to become a net energy exporter within 20 years.

But the study, which found "no direct link to reports of groundwater contamination" due to fracking, was withdrawn Dec. 7 by the University of Texas.

Doubts about the study surfaced in July. A review panel convened to investigate Groat and the study, which was published in February 2012.

In November, Energy Institute Director Raymond Orbach resigned and Groat retired, according to the university.

After the university withdrew the study, Groat told New Orleans City Business that while he agreed in retrospect he should have disclosed his industry connection, he thought he was in the clear because, he said, "I had no responsibility to either review the report or comment on their findings or influence them in any way."

Groat told reporter Jennifer Larino that he chose the researchers and established a timeline for the report's completion, but did not research, write or edit it.

The review panel acknowledged that Groat "had contributed no original work nor had he changed the body of the document."

However, Groat had "overseen the project and participated in summarizing it," the panel said. Its attack on the study took an even harsher stance on the public digests of the study than on the actual report, rebuking the university and Groat for the report summary, its press releases and public statements that all "failed to reflect either the tentative nature of the conclusions reached in the white papers or the often strong caveats conveyed by their individual authors."

The panel also criticized the study's design as based on little more than "literature surveys, incident reports and

conjecture."

It did not accuse Groat of having "ill intent. Further, the panel said that because industry groups did not bankroll the report, Groat's "clear conflict of interest" was "probably not in violation" of university policy at the time. The university has since altered its conflict of interest and disclosure policies.

Now, however, environmental groups in Louisiana want Groat to resign from his new job as head of the Water Institute of the Gulf.

The U.S. government and some state governments have not yet decided whether to allow fracking to continue. Decisions by at least some of those governments are expected in 2013.

The massive initial publicity given to the University of Texas Energy Institute's assertion that fracking is safe has come back to haunt some news outlets.

Press releases omitted clear statements of doubts voiced in the full report. As a result, news coverage of the report suggested that "no significant modification in the current regulatory and enforcement regimes" related to fracking would be required.

The body of the paper included cautions concerning whether state regulators, sometimes poorly funded, could enforce rules designed to protect groundwater from shale-oil operations, especially because so much of what happens during fracking occurs thousands of feet underground. Such statements made it into only a few news accounts.

Thus, the Houston Chronicle editorialized on Feb. 23, 2012, that fracking "has minimal impact on ground water." The editorial described assertions to the contrary as causing "false impressions." Investors Business Daily, known for its conservative-leaning editorial pages, wrote in its editorial, "Given the facts, the Environmental Protection Agency should stop trying to demonize fracking."

Decisions and reports to come

The UT Energy Institute Study had a disproportionate influence on the climate of opinion on fracking partly because it stood alone. Most governmental agencies with plans to study fracking announced delays in their work product from this year to next.

The EPA issued an update on its groundwater study on Dec. 21. The update includes the status of research projects under way for the study but, according to the agency's press release, it "does not draw conclusions about the potential impacts of hydraulic fracturing on drinking water resources, which will be made in the final study." The agency now states that its study will not be finished until late 2014, when a draft will be circulated for comments.

The study, begun in 2010, will encompass the views of geologists, academic experts, industry leaders, environmental groups and Indian tribes, said EPA science advisor Glenn Paulson, speaking in November at a University of Pittsburgh conference on the health effects of fracking. It will be "useful to local governments, and state governments, too," he said. Much of the authority to regulate fracking rests now with state governments.

The Department of the Interior announced this month that it had postponed final issuance of its rules on fracking until 2013. The oil and gas industry and environmental groups oppose the draft rules the Interior Department published in May, albeit for opposite reasons. The industry does not agree that it should be required to disclose the chemical mix used for fracking; environmentalists say the mix should be disclosed before any fracking takes place. The draft regulations would require disclosure, but only after fracking is completed.

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

The U.S. Bureau of Land Management has proposed a rule by which the federal agency would transfer regulation of fracking and other drilling on Indian lands from state governments to the federal government. A final decision is due next year.

On Dec. 17, Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal and Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt wrote a letter asking the Obama Administration to drop the rule, according to the Journal Record.

Jindal and Pruitt argued that the states, not the federal government, are in the better position to regulate the industry, and federal regulation risks adding "burdensome delays and more than $1 billion in unnecessary costs."

The state of New York's decision on whether to permit fracking has been delayed three months from its original Nov. 29 deadline to allow completion of a health study. During that time, that state's moratorium on fracking will continue.

Maryland also has a fracking moratorium in effect until 2014. The 2013 Legislature may permanently ban fracking. According to the Maryland Daily Record, America's Natural Gas Alliance has hired local representatives to lobby state lawmakers to head off the ban.

Exxon's confidence

Perhaps because of the unequivocal way the University of Texas study was presented, the oil and gas industry is increasingly bullish on domestic energy despite regulatory uncertainties.

Exxon Mobil Corp. released its latest long-term energy outlook on Dec. 11, and clearly the abundance of shale oil potentially produced by fracking exerted a significant influence on it. The report claims that natural gas will surpass coal to become the "no. 2" global fuel, after oil, a transformation made possible because "technology is enabling the safe development of once hard-to-produce energy resources."

That prompted Exxon to predict: "Around 2030, the nations of North America will likely transition from a net importer to a net exporter of oil and oil-based products. The changing energy landscape and the resulting trade opportunities it affords will continue to provide consumers with more choices, more value, more wealth and more good jobs."

But the environmental and political acceptability of the technologies that would produce amounts of oil and gas sufficient to create an export market are far from settled. In its report, Exxon describes hydraulic fracturing as safe, but a public consensus on that assertion remains elusive.

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

EPA head Jackson to resign post
Washington Post

12/27/2012

By Juliet Eilperin, Updated: Thursday, December 27, 11:46 AM

Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lisa P. Jackson, who pushed through the most sweeping curbs on air pollution in two decades, announced Thursday morning that she will resign her post.

Jackson, who will step down shortly after President Obama's State of the Union address next month, has not accepted another job, according to several individuals who have spoken with her. Many expected that she would not remain for the administration's second term; Jackson herself joked about it recently.

Outspoken on issues including climate change and the need to protect disadvantaged communities from experiencing a disproportionate amount of environmental harm, Jackson pressed for limits on emissions from coal-fired power plants as well as the dumping of mining waste into streams and rivers near mines.

The slew of rules EPA enacted over the past four years — including the first-ever greenhouse gas standards for vehicles, cuts in mercury and other toxic pollution from power plants and a tighter limit on soot, the nation's most widespread deadly pollutant — prompted many congressional Republicans and business groups to suggest Jackson was waging a "war on coal." But it also made Jackson a hero to the environmental community, who viewed her as their most high-profile advocate within the Obama administration.

In a statement, Jackson thanked Obama "for the honor he bestowed on me and the confidence he placed in me four years ago this month when he announced my nomination," and noted that the agency had taken action on issues ranging from global warming to water quality.

"So, I will leave the EPA confident the ship is sailing in the right direction, and ready in my own life for new challenges, time with my family and new opportunities to make a difference," she said.

The president issued a statement praising Jackson.

"Under her leadership, the EPA has taken sensible and important steps to protect the air we breathe and the water we drink, including implementing the first national standard for harmful mercury pollution, taking important action to combat climate change under the Clean Air Act, and playing a key role in establishing historic fuel economy standards that will save the average American family thousands of dollars at the pump while also slashing carbon pollution," Obama said.

It remains unclear how ambitious an agenda EPA will pursue in Obama's second term, although environmental leaders have called on the president to limit greenhouse gas emissions from existing power plants. EPA will soon finalize the first carbon standard for new power utilities, but the White House has yet to decide whether to impose limits on existing facilities, according to several individuals who have been briefed on the matter but asked not to be identified because no final decision has been made.

It has delayed making a contentious decision on whether to classify coal ash as a hazardous waste, and is fighting in federal court to reinstate rules governing cross-state air pollution from coal plants in the eastern half of the United States.

Gene Karpinski, president of the League of Conservation Voters, praised Jackson in an e-mail as "a fearless leader who, despite relentless attacks by big polluters and their allies in Congress, made unprecedented progress on cutting carbon

and other dangerous pollution from cars and power plants."

Michael Brune, executive director of the Sierra Club, said his members will be looking for EPA to "have a strong voice" in whether Obama should approve the Keystone XL pipeline carrying heavy crude oil from Canada to the United States, and to press ahead with carbon limits on existing power plants. "It's arguably the biggest thing the administration can do by itself, without legislation, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions," he said in an interview.

Scott Segal, a partner at the law firm Bracewell Giuliani who represents coal-fired utilities as director of the Electric Reliability Coordinating Council, wrote in an e-mail that Jackson managed to drive environmental policy in Washington because of "her excellent communications skills, likable personality and skilled use of political leverage. "

But Segal also criticized her for enacting costly regulations and misguiding the public by exaggerating their benefits: "Agency rules have been used as blunt attempts to marginalize coal and other solid fossil fuels and to make motor fuels more costly at the expense of industrial jobs, energy security and economic recovery."

Many of the most significant regulations EPA enacted over the past four years arose from settlements with environmental groups, which had challenged rules the agency issued under President George W. Bush.

The agency is likely to tackle several other difficult policy questions beyond climate change during the next few years, including stricter regulation of toxic chemicals and water quality. It is also in the midst of a long-term study of how hydraulic fracturing is affecting the environment, which could trigger new federal rules governing natural gas extraction.

Obama has not picked Jackson's successor, although two of the leading candidates for the job work at the EPA: Deputy Administrator Bob Perciasepe and Gina McCarthy, who heads the agency's air and radiation office. Jackson has told several people she considers Perciasepe, who headed both EPA's water and air and radiation office under President Bill Clinton, as well prepared to take the agency's helm.

Both candidates could face challenges in getting confirmed by the Senate since they helped craft many of EPA's policies during Obama's first term. But they are also seen as career officials rather than political activists: Segal noted that given the pending issues, "the next EPA leader will need a good working knowledge of the agency and the practical limitations of implementation and enforcement for such major rules," which argues for "an inside choice" such as Perciasepe or McCarthy.

While Jackson successfully pushed for a number of landmark environmental initiatives, including limits on nutrient pollution flowing from several states into the Chesapeake Bay, she also suffered a high-profile setback when Obama pulled an EPA proposal last year to curb smog-forming ozone pollution. At the time, the president argued that the new rules would unnecessarily damage the economy and was not essential because the agency was slated to review the issue in 2013.

The child of a postal worker who grew up in New Orleans' 9th Ward, Jackson often spoke of her personal history when explaining her public policy decisions. When discussing climate change and environmental disasters, she recalled driving her mother, stepfather and aunt out of the city in the face of Hurricane Katrina, which destroyed her mother's home; when announcing new air quality rules, she frequently referred to the agony she felt as a mother watching her infant son struggle with asthma. During an interview with The Washington Post, she once started singing Stevie Wonder's 1973 hit "Living for the City" to describe how far the country had come in terms of cleaning up air pollution.

While she managed to charm some of her critics — Sen. James M. Inhofe (R-Okla.) referred to Jackson as "my favorite bureaucrat" — the EPA administrator alienated much of the business community. In a recent call with reporters about soot emissions limits, Ross Eisenberg, vice president for energy and resources policy at the National Association of Manufacturers, complained that Jackson and her deputies consistently failed to achieve a balance when regulating

pollutants from industrial activities.

"EPA seems wedded to the notion that it must push its policies as hard as it possibly can, with the goal being to enact the strictest possible standard that will survive legal scrutiny," Eisenberg said. "That's not EPA's job."

Jackson has told friends she is open to pursuing consulting and public speaking and misses New Jersey, which is where she and her family lived before moving to Washington in 2009. Her name has been floated as a possible candidate for the presidency of Princeton University, where she received a graduate degree in engineering.

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

fracturing controversial drilling practiced EPA's doing a big study
KPCC-FM (89.3 KPCC)

12/27/2012

her friends say when the biggest moments of need . during her tenant was when the agency declared carbon dioxide emissions contribute to global warming and our threat to public health a lot of the rules and talk about today emanates from that so Bob would you we should also stated that the in-house there were some some fighting with the White House a lot of the rules were pushed through despite the White House which put the climate change issue kind of in its pocket after failed in Congress and gives a sample of some unfinished business that she leaves behind what we have not referencing right hydraulic fracturing controversial drilling practiced EPA's doing a big study of whether there are risks to drinking water that stew on twenty fourteen soaping fight there were also waiting for one of it , with new rules on existing power plants and regulation potentially of toxic chemicals in the water those might be onward to which also believes behind is a very toxic political environment many people inside the agency said its worst American remember solely subjects in ways that behind as well thanks the context replaces Scott tong you're welcome and let student numbers that for this hour the Dow was off about six tenths of a percent counting eighty four points to thirteen thousand and thirty S&P 500 is off in terms of percent on the NASDAQ is down about the same amount in US consumer confidence is down and there's not much to blame in the other data that were seeing stories about physical is really affecting Outlook on Senate floor this morning Majority Leader Harry Reid said it looks to them like we are headed over there is some better news out there number of Americans filing new claims for one hundred pounds lowest level since the economic downturn and new homes in the West were selling the pace in November in more than two years new homes are not the focus of the large majority of homebuyers but we do keep a close eye on that number because of its outsized impact on economy is not received from existing home sales are more than ninety percent of the housing market says Greg McBride at an great .com if you want to understand how thing that's the important number sales see more about the economy at large is taking place in his own property in a potential sale that you don't get with to just turn over an existing home sales growth of this crop of new construction growth interrupted Los Angeles realtor Alan glass says eleven today's new homes were planned years ago and I know you are as a human being finish because there's demand balance blogs about real estate at Seattle bubble .com describes a scene in a new subdivision known as people camping out and we , the silver undertone , and he says first-time buyers are being placed in the wellness because investors are snapping up bargains that short sales and foreclosures I need trial for marketplace for marketplace morning report is supported by CEP formerly corporate executive Board working to include senior leaders and their teams insight and actionable solutions to transform operations one - Lindsay EB sustainability coverage is supported in part by the Candida fund furthering values that contribute to a healthy planet in Baltimore a five pointed star with dozens of bulbs still shines of renewal once operated by Bethlehem Steel but when this year's holidays and local landmark is likely go the way of the steel business that once sat beneath it is reported Bruce Wallace the star at sparrows point steel mill first rose in the late seventies shining atop a massive blast furnace and would go out are the glue is the crane operator to go for thirty four years you were all right and I make a final approach to BWI is filed under it it out tonight always grinning sparrows point was operated for most of its one hundred and twenty years by Bethlehem Steel at its height in the nineteen fifties it employs thirty thousand but earlier this year the mill declared bankruptcy and was sold to a liquidation for two thousand people lost their jobs the militant dark since spring the current owner cocoa trading decided to like to start anyway Mike Lewis figures at the gesture of solace you are greeted to our own editor respect about it earlier now we should outlaw an area of lower people's livelihood I just think it almost like the vultures were shown a little bit of mercy and love of baby care totally bad this time next year the surface of the star sits will likely be long gone I'm Bruce Wallace for marketplace is finally some brilliant business minds in Brazil have figured out how to make food even faster

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

EPA releases update on fracking study
Mountain Xpress - Online

12/27/2012

EPA releases update on fracking study

By David Forbes on 12/27/2012 09:15 AM

From the Environmental Protection Agency:

WASHINGTON - The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) today provided an update on its ongoing national study currently underway to better understand any potential impacts of hydraulic fracturing on drinking water resources. Results of the study, which Congress requested EPA to complete, are expected to be released in a draft for public and peer review in 2014. The update provided today outlines work currently underway, including the status of research projects that will inform the final study. It is important to note that while this progress report outlines the framework for the final study, it does not draw conclusions about the potential impacts of hydraulic fracturing on drinking water resources, which will be made in the final study.

As the administration and EPA has made clear, natural gas has a central role to play in our energy future, and this important domestic fuel source has extensive economic, energy security, and environmental benefits. The study EPA is currently undertaking is part of EPA's focus to ensure that as the Administration continues to work to expand production of this important domestic resource safely and responsibly.

Among the information released today are updates on 18 research projects and details on the agency's research approach as well as next steps for these ongoing projects and analyses. Today's update follows the public release, in November 2011, of the agency's final study plan, which underwent scientific peer review and public comment.

EPA has engaged stakeholders, including industry, to ensure that the study reflects current practices in hydraulic fracturing. EPA continues to request data and information from the public and stakeholders and has put out a formal request for information which can be accessed through the federal register at: https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2012/11/09/2012-27452/r equest-for-information-to-inform-hydraulic-fracturing-research-related-to-drinking-water-resources

EPA also expects to release a draft report of results from the study in late 2014. The study has been designated a Highly Influential Scientific Assessment, meaning it will receive the highest level of peer review in accordance with EPA's peer review handbook before it is finalized. The 2014 draft report will synthesize the results from the ongoing projects together with the scientific literature to answer the study's main research questions.

EPA's Science Advisory Board (SAB) is forming a panel of independent experts which will review and provide their individual input on the ongoing study to EPA. The SAB will provide an opportunity for the public to offer comments for consideration by the individual panel members. For more information on the SAB process, please visit: http://yosemite.epa.gov/sab/sabpeople.nsf/WebCommittees/BOARD

More information: www.epa.gov/hfstudy

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

EPA Releases Update on ongoing hydraulic fracturing study. ThomasNet News

12/27/2012

EPA Releases Update on ongoing hydraulic fracturing study.

December 27, 2012 -

Results from U.S. EPA's ongoing national study to understand potential impacts of hydraulic fracturing on drinking water resources will be released in draft for public and peer review in 2014. EPA provided update that outlines work currently underway, including status of research projects that will inform the final study. Among information released are updates on 18 research projects and details on agency's research approach as well as next steps for these ongoing projects and analyses.

EPA Releases Update on Ongoing Hydraulic Fracturing Study

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Ariel Rios Building

Washington, DC, 20460

USA

Press release date: December 21, 2012

WASHINGTON - The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) today provided an update on its ongoing national study currently underway to better understand any potential impacts of hydraulic fracturing on drinking water resources. Results of the study, which Congress requested EPA to complete, are expected to be released in a draft for public and peer review in 2014. The update provided today outlines work currently underway, including the status of research projects that will inform the final study. It is important to note that while this progress report outlines the framework for the final study, it does not draw conclusions about the potential impacts of hydraulic fracturing on drinking water resources, which will be made in the final study.

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More information: www.epa.gov/hfstudy

Start Your

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

UPDATED: EPA's FRACKED UP REPORT - See Interactive Map to View EACH Fracking Well Info
DAILY KOS

12/27/2012

This is a big story. You can help spread the word via twitter. But, before we get excited here, this is the EPA's "Progress Report" which will be followed by further studies, yaddy yadda yadda. You might detect some dismay in this diary because, according to this EPA Progress Report "Many of the data come directly from the oil and gas industry and states with high levels of oil and gas activity." Mostly from only nine (9) companies. After all that has happened with "self-reporting" by industries, it's difficult to understand why the EPA would rely on the industry and states depending on a continual flow of these two cash crops for data.

In short, EPA is saying they have relied heavily on the oil/gas industry and the states experiencing an economic boom from the fracking industry. The Progress report is the BEGINNING of a much longer process which includes several other steps before EPA concludes whether or not fracking might have a negative impact on drinking water.

The fact that the early progress report did not contain anything significantly negative is likely an encouraging sign for the fracking lobby. Therefore, it's easy to conclude that, by the time all the designated experts chime in, it will be too late to save water in present heavily fracked areas.

Most now know that Fracking is exempt from key federal environmental regulations, thanks to a Bush Era ruling, known as the "Hallibuton Loophole." No surprise there. Halliburton fracked back in the late 1940s.

We can guess that Cheney and the oil/gas secret energy meetings included some fracking chit chat.

Here's why I am concerned. I know people working in the fracking fields. I know that liners for fracking waste water leaks. I know that some waste water ponds don't even have linings. I know workers wear dosimeters to make sure they aren't exposed to too much radiation. Do an Edit/Find search after opening the EPA Report for the word "radionuclides" (14 hits and defined on Page 259). I know trucks crash and spill the toxic waste on road sides. I know wells fail and spew oil spills. Anyone who knows people working in the fields can confirm what a mess it is out there. There are also no lack of people reporting problems with their drinking water, like the famous video of faucet water being ignited by the home owner.

Apparently, such demonstrations like these are not scientific enough proof for the EPA.

That said I am CALLING ALL SCIENTISTS here on DKos to read through this first stage of EPA's just released start up reporting on the POSSIBLE NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF FRACKING ON DRINKING WATER

Matt Damon is releasing his FRACKING Movie, Promised Land. Here's the trailer

Promised Land TRAILER (2012) - Matt Damon Movie HD

At the end of this diary is an exciting Google Earth Tool that shows where thousands of fracking welsl are located, many on the banks of major drinking water sources. If you click on one of the green frowny faced disks, it will tell you which company owns the well, etc. The instructions are included.

Actually EPA completed a report on August 14, 2011* (professionals from the Yucca Mountain project assisted). I'm not sure if or whether the 2011 report impacts last week's report. More on the 2011 report below.

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From EPAs 2012 report:

In 2011, the EPA began research under its Plan to Study the Potential Impacts of Hydraulic Fracturing on Drinking Water Resources. The purpose of the study is to assess the potential impacts of hydraulic fracturing on drinking water resources, if any, and to identify the driving factors that may affect the severity and frequency of such impacts. Scientists are focusing primarily on hydraulic fracturing of shale formations to extract natural gas, with some study of other oil- and gas-producing formations, including tight sands, and coalbeds.

The EPA has designed the scope of the research around five stages of the hydraulic fracturing water cycle. Each stage of the cycle is associated with a primary research question:

Water acquisition: impacts of large volume water withdrawals from ground and surface waters on drinking water resources?

Chemical mixing: impacts of hydraulic fracturing fluid surface spills on or near well pads on drinking water resources?

Well injection: impacts of the injection and fracturing process on drinking water resources?

Flowback and produced water: What are the possible impacts of flowback and produced water (collectively referred to as "hydraulic fracturing wastewater") surface spills on or near well pads on drinking water resources?

Wastewater treatment and waste disposal: What are the possible impacts of inadequate treatment of hydraulic fracturing wastewater on drinking water resources?

YES, there are hopes, even designs, of fracking water treatment plants producing water that can be released back into the area.

The baselines for the study are quite limited, as if the variables for what could go wrong are not infinite in scope:

Data from multiple sources have been obtained for review and analysis.

Many of the data come directly from the oil and gas industry and states with high levels of oil and gas activity.

Information on the chemicals and practices used in hydraulic fracturing has been collected from nine companies that hydraulically fractured a total of 24,925 wells between September 2009 and October 2010.

Additional data on chemicals and water use for hydraulic fracturing are being pulled from over 12,000 well-specific chemical disclosures in FracFocus, a national hydraulic fracturing chemical registry operated by the Ground Water Protection Council and the Interstate Oil and Gas Compact Commisson.

Only nine companies? Good grief! Which companies?

Here's the list of companies operating in just North Dakota, from a state website.

There are a lot more than nine companies listed.

I think anyone with common sense knows the inherent danger of destroying water in the fracking process. It takes millions of gallons of water that is mixed with a chemical cocktail to drill each well!

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

We also know that the economy of North Dakota will tank if any proof of contamination is reported by the EPA. No danger of that happening right away. By the time the EPA and the industry experts massage the information, the drillers and hoards of workers will have moved on to new territory to drill baby drill, turning the USA into swiss cheese.

What could possibly go wrong?

The Sierra Club tries to answer that question in this article

The six reservoirs along the river currently provide water storage primarily for flood control, reservoir recreation and releases for navigation. But the Corps' recent notice proposes that portions of the reservoir space be available for purchase by industry. That industry is assumed to include major demands from fracking interests. Is there any question that the Missouri River is already providing millions and millions of gallons of water for fracking in North Dakota?

*** M U S T S E E ** SOME FRACKING CHEMICALS REVEALED 2011

AGAIN, CALLING ALL SCIENTISTS - The EPA has done some work already. In this document there is a list of fracking components.

In this document this list of fracking chemicals is included on pages 41 - 42:

Well it's nice to see one FRACKING FLUID REPORT.

*** M U S T S E E ***

In the 2012 EPA report the list of FRACKING FLUID COMPONENTS can be found on pags 194 - 244

Check them out.

* I N T E R A C T I V E MAP OF FRACKING WELL LOCATION & COMPANY **

Also this is an amazing amount of work:

Someone has created a Google Earth map of FRACKING WELLS. This is interative.

Open this website: http://climateviewer.com/...

Click on FRACKING AMERICA and wait for the Green discs to appear

Just above the upper left bar that says EARTH, MOON, MARS etc, CLICK on the red Joy Stick to the right so the NAVIGATION TOOLS will appear.

In the upper right hand corner, you can click on the first icon on the left to get rid of whatever that guys name is playing Dr. Evil.

Then zoom in and you will find the DETAILED INFORMATION for each well.

As importantly, and more sadly, and especially in North Dakota, you will see that fracking wells are literally along the banks of the Missouri River and the huge reservoirs behind the dams controlling the flow of the great Missouri.

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Top 10 in Law Blogs : LXBN December 26, 2012
Real Lawyers :: Have Blogs

12/27/2012

When Twitter first announced it would soon allow users to download their complete tweet history, I wondered why anyone would need to do that—sounds like a simple ploy to appease privacy advocates. Well, Aaron Weems points out one interesting use today: it makes legal discovery of tweets a lot easier.Total posts on the LexBlog Network today: 106.

Holiday Season Extravaganza: NLRB Issues Flurry Of Law Changing Decisions – Los Angeles lawyer Mark Theodore of Proskauer on the firm's blog Labor Relations Update

Transitioning New Jersey to Alternative Energy Vehicles – Newark lawyer Adam Arnold of Gibbons on the firm's Real Property & Environmental Law Alert

In the Matter of Mason: Debt to a former spouse is non-dischargeable in bankruptcy – Manchester attorney Kysa Crusco in her New Hampshire Family Law Blog

DWI Defense Issues- 2012 Year in Review – MN attorney Chuck Ramsay on his blog, Minnesota DWI Defense

U.S. EPA Provides Update On Study of Hydraulic Fracturing's Water Impacts – Columbus lawyer Jason Yearout of Baker Hostetler on the firm's Utilica Marcellus Shale Monitor

Poetic Justice – 2012 Wrap Up (Part 1 of 2) – New York attorney Michael Schmidtof Cozen O'Connor on the Social Media Employment Law Blog

New E-Verify Employer Search Tool – Fort Myers lawyer Tulio Suarez of Henderson, Franklin, Starnes & Holt on the firm' s Florida Immigration Law Blog

Twitter Download Makes Account Production Easy and Risky for Clients – Blue Bell attorney Aaron Weems of Fox Rothschild on the firm's blog, Pennsylvania Family Law

OSHA Forecast: Developments to Watch For In 2013 – Washington, DC lawyer Eric Conn of EpsteinBeckerGreen on the firm's blog, OSHA Law Update

First Question For Doing Business In China: Is It Legal? – Seattle attorney Dan Harris on his firm's blog China Law Blog.

For more of the best, check out LXBN, a complete review of the top insight and commentary across the LexBlog Network.

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The New Robber Barons
Ammoland Shooting Sports News

12/26/2012

The Obama Gang is stealing our taxes, energy resources, revenues, jobs and economy.
By Paul Driessen

AmmoLand Gun News

Washington, DC --(Ammoland.com)- An oil and natural gas boom is underway in the United States, born of horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracturing, or "fracking."

It has created tens of thousands of well-paying jobs directly, and hundreds of thousands more in hundreds of businesses that supply and support the industry and its workers.

In North Dakota, the unemployment rate is 2.4 percent, in large part because of a huge increase in natural gas and crude oil production from deep shale rocks that yielded nothing prior to fracking. The new technology is also driving job growth, higher incomes, and increased tax revenues for hard-pressed state and local governments in Louisiana, Pennsylvania, Texas and other states.

Meanwhile, 350 miles north of Edmonton, Alberta, other innovators are producing billions of barrels from oil sands that stretch across an area the size of Utah. Shallow deposits are accessible via surface mining, while deeper lodes are tapped using in situ drilling and steam injection. As work is completed in an area, the land is restored to woodlands, grasslands, lakes and marshes, and the process moves on.

As with fracking, the oil sands create tens of thousands of high-paying jobs and generate billions in revenue, benefitting people from Fort McMurray, Calgary and Vancouver to Ottawa and Halifax, and throughout the United States. Construction of the Keystone XL Pipeline would multiply these benefits.

And yet, despite ample evidence that responsible development of these enormous energy resources could power a national economic, manufacturing and employment renaissance, the Obama Administration's environmental ideologies and political debts to radical green groups could delay or stymie progress.

The new robber barons in the Executive Branch and Congress are not content only with taxing job creators and saddling our children and great grandchildren with trillion-dollar IOUs. They are using hard-earned tax money to finance wind, solar, biofuel and other schemes that primarily reward crony capitalist campaign contributors. They're also locking up centuries' of oil, gas, coal and uranium that could generate an economic revival, millions of jobs, and many billions in federal, state and local royalty and tax revenues.

Some say the way these robber barons use, abuse and ignore laws to advance this agenda reminds them of the infamous James Gang, which plundered banks and trains until Northfield, Minnesota citizens ended their lawless ways. Others say a better example is the Chicago-based Al Capone mob.

Still others point to the Capitol Hill "fiscal cliff" negotiations, as providing clues as to what lies ahead. President Obama says he favors a "balanced" approach to avoid fiscal calamity, but insists on raising taxes on high-income citizens – and will not discuss reining in entitlement expenditures that are lead life preservers on taxpayers and our economy. His Treasury Secretary tells us, "There are no options."

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The President's unique concept of "balance" also defines his "all of the above" energy program. Like Humpty Dumpty, his words mean just what he chooses them to mean – as in all of the above-ground projects, but none of the below-ground resources. Perhaps the real question is, who is to be master ... of our lives, natural resources, nation and pursuit of happiness?

Thus the Administration banned oil development on 1.6 million more acres of federal lands in the West and millions more on the Outer Continental Shelf, while delaying leasing and drilling in still more areas – on top of vast acreage and resources that Congress placed off limits through legislation. The ruling czars and robber barons also imposed ethanol-in-gasoline requirements that turn 40% of the nation's corn crop into fuel, converting an area the size of Missouri from growing food crops to producing fuel that we could get by drilling, and driving up the cost of countless food products.

Their wind and solar programs waste billions of tax dollars on expensive, unreliable electricity projects that blanket habitats and steal our wildlife heritage, in violation of clear environmental laws.

Meanwhile, EPA issued still more hugely expensive rules that effectively ban the use of coal in electricity generation – sending coal's contribution from 45% a few years ago to 35% today, and killing thousands of mining and utility jobs. Its latest rules demand that the transportation sector slash its soot emissions another 20% – ostensibly to reduce asthma, other illnesses and "thousands" of premature deaths.

In reality, the only health or environmental benefits exist in EPA computer models, press releases and cover-ups of illegal experiments on humans, whose response to being subjected to "dangerous" levels of soot actually disproved EPA's claim that tougher standards are needed. EPA has also ignored the significant health risks caused by its regulations, especially for now unemployed older workers.

In the midst of all this, at the just concluded United Nations climate change negotiations in Doha, Qatar, Obama Administration representatives entertained brazen proposals to require developed countries to compensate less developed countries for "climate change damages" – under a wealth redistribution scheme that could potentially cost United States taxpayers hundreds of billions of dollars. Also in the works are EPA rules, laws and treaty agreements to force the US to curb fossil fuel use and CO2 emissions.

Inconvenient facts about these decisions were simply ignored – or treated much the same way as Steven Spielberg handled his powerful and entertaining Lincoln movie. It was released after the 2012 elections, many believe, so that minority and other voters would learn too late that it was our sixteenth president and other Republicans who championed the end of slavery – and northern and southern Democrats who fought to prevent passage of the Thirteenth Amendment, outlawing the heinous practice.

The robber barons say whatever is expedient – and then pursue policies that undermine the overall public welfare, while postponing many costly and politically explosive actions until after elections.

They also ignore and undermine the recent International Energy Agency forecast that, by 2020, the USA could be producing more oil than Saudi Arabia, currently the largest oil producer on the globe, thanks to advances in seismic, fracking, deepwater drilling and other technologies. A March 2012 Citi Global Problems and Solutions report painted a clear picture of the benefits that domestic energy development could bring – if government "public servants" and environmental "public interest" groups would permit it.

Cumulatively, the new production, reduced consumption and numerous activities associated with these technologies "could increase real GDP by an additional 2% to 3%, creating from 2.7 million to as many as 3.6 million net new jobs by 2020," the Citi report stated. They could also shrink America's "current account deficit" by 2.4% of GDP (a 60% reduction in the current budget deficit) and cause the dollar to appreciate in real terms by +1.6 to +5.4% – all by 2020.

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In the next few decades, Citi concluded, the energy sector "could drive an extraordinary and timely revitalization and reindustrialization of the U.S. economy, creating jobs and bringing prosperity to millions of Americans, just as the national economy struggles to recover from the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression." It would also "improve national energy security and reverse perennial current account deficits" for decades to come.

However, as the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research has made clear, these enormous benefits "are at risk if new restrictions are imposed on the industry, from delays in approval of liquid natural gas exports, to opposition to expanding ports for coal and gas export, to opposition to pipelines and refineries, and to the threat of redundant federal regulations on the technology of hydraulic fracturing." Worse, foregoing these enormous benefits would bring little or no improvement to the environment or human welfare.

Abundant, reliable, affordable energy is the backbone of the US and global economy. Perhaps one day renewable energy will become a viable alternative to the hydrocarbons that sustain jobs and energize virtually everything we make, ship, eat and do. Until then, America and the world need to promote regulatory sanity and increased production of our enormous base of coal, oil and natural gas resources.

Paul Driessen is senior policy advisor for the Committee For A Constructive Tomorrow (www.CFACT.org) and author of Eco-Imperialism: Green power – Black death.

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

In fracking culture war, celebs, billionaires and banjos
Japan Today

12/26/2012

Entertainment Dec. 27, 2012 - 06:59AM JST ( )

Not so long ago, fracking was a technical term little known beyond the energy industry. Now it's coming to Hollywood, as the fierce battle between environmentalists and oil firms is played out in several forthcoming films.

Hydraulic fracturing, the controversial drilling technique also known as fracking, has lifted U.S. energy output dramatically, despite warnings from critics who fear it pollutes water deep underground.

Any shift in public opinion could impact policy - and huge sums in energy spending - since drilling regulations are under review by the Obama administration and local officials around the country. The high stakes involve a range of issues from U.S. energy independence, to protection of drinking water.

Both sides are using movies to try to win the debate, though actor Matt Damon says viewers should not assume the movie he stars in, "Promised Land," is "a rabid anti-fracking polemic."

In the film, Damon plays a gas company landman - an agent who buys or leases land - intent on drilling beneath a town where some residents are concerned about the perils of fracking. As the landman gets to know the townspeople, he suffers a crisis of conscience.

In an interview in Los Angeles, Damon said he worries that viewers will wrongly assume the film is one-sided and not see it. He declined to offer his personal view on fracking. "That's not the point. The point is that the film should start a conversation."

The Northern Irish director Phelim McAleer's documentary, "FrackNation," is an unabashedly pro-drilling mantra set to air next month on AXS TV, the cable network controlled by Dallas Mavericks owner and media mogul Mark Cuban.

McAleer views fracking as "the best thing ever," a potential savior for the U.S. economy, unless the forces he likes to call

"Big Enviro" succeed in derailing it.

On the other side of the argument, HBO, the cable pay channel, could air a sequel to "Gasland," a scathing 2010 documentary from director Josh Fox, as early as next year.

The original film featured scenes of tap water erupting into flames and mobilized environmental groups against fracking, drawing full-throated rebuttals from an oil industry that says the process has never caused water problems.

Fox declined comment for this article.

Amid the showdown, both industry and anti-fracking camps have mounted major campaigns to sway hearts and minds.

"It could become the biggest environmental debate of our time," said Robert McNally, an energy policy expert and former White House adviser under George W. Bush. "Hollywood is taking notice, and the industry will have its work cut out for it to defend fracking."

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Nearly four out of 10 Americans surveyed by the Pew Research Center early this year said they knew nothing about fracking. Other polls show most Americans familiar with the practice believe fracking offers economic benefits but requires tougher regulation.

This year, for the first time, U.S. online searches for the term "fracking" became more popular than "climate change," Google data showed. Fracking has doubled on Google's popularity index since last year, and while "global warming" still draws more hits, the gap is narrowing.

Drinking water contamination is the leading environmental concern among Americans, according to Gallup polling data. A Bloomberg National Poll this month showed that 66 percent of Americans want more fracking regulation, up from 56% in September.

Whether "Promised Land" will shift public opinion is uncertain. But films with environmental themes often can, according to Joseph Cappella, a professor of communications at the University of Pennsylvania.

Past examples include Al Gore's "An Inconvenient Truth" on climate change, and "Erin Brockovich," a dramatization of real events in which actress Julia Roberts played a legal clerk who uncovers water contamination by a California power company.

Ahead of the release of "Promised Land," some within the oil industry are already reading the film's script online.

"Look, I don't want to whistle past the graveyard. This film is going to be a challenge, and we'll just have to see how it does on opening weekend," said Chris Tucker of pro-drilling group Energy In Depth (EID), which is funded by industry. "In terms of popularization of the issue, it will have an effect."

The oil industry wants to avoid another blow like the one it took from Fox's 2010 "Gasland" film. Google search data shows online interest in fracking surged immediately afterwards.

For three years, Tucker has been working with other communications experts, "pounding the zone with facts" to counter what he calls false claims in "Gasland" and to promote drilling.

Films like "Promised Land" will get people curious and send them searching online, said Tucker, where he worries the term

'fracking' gets a bad rap. "People will go home and Google it, and the other side does really well on Google," he said.

EID released its own pro-drilling film, "Truthland," this year, dubbing it "the factual alternative to Gasland."

In some ways, the film blitz may be behind the times. Fracking has already come to dominate U.S. drilling over the last half-decade: Onshore rigs doing so-called unconventional drilling account for nearly two-thirds of the total.

Tucker and industry officials are regulars at conferences, in newspaper op-ed articles, and on TV to defend drilling.

On the environmentalist side, Fox travels widely to lead anti-fracking rallies, sometimes rousing crowds by playing a banjo, which is also featured in the Gasland soundtrack. He has enlisted help from artists including Yoko Ono and Sean Lennon.

"The lesson of 'Gasland' is that public perception is a very big part of the equation," said Jonathan Wood, a political risk analyst at London-based Control Risks, whose clients include oil companies.

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In a report this month, Wood wrote that the industry has "largely failed to appreciate social and political risks, and has repeatedly been caught off guard by the sophistication, speed and influence of anti-fracking activists."

Hydraulic fracturing entails pumping water laced with chemicals and sand at high pressure into shale rock formations to break them up and unleash hydrocarbons.

The minerals are trapped thousands of feet below water tables, but critics worry that fracking fluids or hydrocarbons can still leak into water tables from wells, or above ground. Among their other concerns: fracking-related earthquakes, and growing dependence on fossil fuels.

The United States now rivals Russia as the world's top gas producer, in large part due to fracking, and has stemmed a long decline in oil output, which stands at an 18-year high near 7 million barrels a day.

So far, the Obama administration has cautiously endorsed the new drilling, but the U.S. Department of Interior is working on new fracking rules on public lands starting next year.

Some drillers have faced fracking-related fines for water contamination due to spilled fracking fluid. Last year, after sampling water in rural Pavillion, Wyoming, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) presented the first-ever U.S. government finding of a potential link between fracking and water contamination.

More broadly, however, the EPA condones fracking on safety grounds. But unlike the growing consensus among climate scientists linking global warming and industrial activity, there is no consensus that fracking poses a danger. Unconventional drilling has surged only over the last half decade.

The EPA will release an in-depth study on fracking's potential impacts on water supplies in 2014.

Tough economic times can widen support for drilling. A national Gallup poll this year showed that more Americans favored prioritizing economic growth over the protection of the environment (49% versus 41%).

That's a reversal from 2007, when 55% favored environmental protection.

Cuban is betting the hot potato issue will draw viewers to "FrackNation" on his cable channel.

"Op-Ed-umentaries like this are supposed to make people think about the topic, which is always a good thing," he said.

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EPA Issues Progress Report On Fracking Study
New York League Of Conservation Voters | Electing For The Environment

12/26/2012

Click above to learn more about the role of water in the fracking process.The Environmental Protection Agency this week made public an update on its progress reviewing the potential impacts on drinking water of natural gas hydraulic fracturing and drilling.

read more

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EDITORIAL: California must insist on full disclosure of chemicals used in oil and gas 'fracking' [The Sacramento Bee]
Equities.com

12/26/2012

Energy var addthis_config = ;

The Sacramento Bee McClatchy-Tribune Information Services

Dec. 23--For decades in California, energy companies have used a method called hydraulic fracturing, or "fracking," to extract deposits of oil and natural gas from deep underground. The process involves injecting pressurized water, sand and chemical additives into a wellbore to fracture the rock formations to get at the fossil fuels.

The oil industry lauds hydraulic fracturing for unlocking enormous amounts of domestic gas and oil. In a recent letter to The Bee, Catherine Reheis-Boyd, president of the Western States Petroleum Association, said that this process "has been employed in California for 60 years and there has never been evidence that it has caused harm to water supplies or the environment."

Reheis-Boyd's unflinching confidence reminds us of chemical industry claims that DDT was safe in the 1950s or oil industry claims in the 1990s that MTBE, a gasoline additive, was safe. After all, if something has been used widely for many years, it can't be harmful, right?

The reality is, with fracking, we just don't know. The process has been little studied in California and nationwide by independent scientists. Only now is the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency launching a truly independent study of how fracking could affect drinking water supplies. The EPA released a progress report on that study last week, and hopes to have some firmer results next year, assuming the oil industry allows it to study a site before and after fracking.

Here in the Golden State, the stakes couldn't be higher. California is the nation's third-largest producer of oil, and is home to the largest oil shale formation in the continental United States -- the Monterey Shale. Oil companies are preparing to expand exploratory wells into that deep deposit, which runs from Los Angeles to Northern California and is thought to contain 15 billion barrels of oil.

Under pressure from environmentalists, the administration of Gov. Jerry Brown last week released preliminary draft regulations on fracking. To its credit, the California Division of Oil, Gas and Geothermal Resources wants energy companies, for the first time, to disclose where they are engaged in hydraulic fracturing. Regulators say the proposed rules contain some of the strongest provisions in the nation, including a requirement that oil companies test the integrity of their wells to guard against leaks of fracturing chemicals and report those test results to the state.

That's a step forward, but the draft regulations would still allow energy companies to withhold what kind of chemicals they are using, if they deem their formulas to be "trade secrets." Industry officials say disclosure of proprietary formulas would stifle competition and prevent extraction of an important natural resource.

Sorry, but as valuable as fossil fuels are, California groundwater is a much more treasured resource, and it needs to be protected. We don't allow food companies to withhold the fact they might be adding carcinogenic chemicals to their recipes. Why should we allow oil companies to do the same with fracking?

California must insist on full disclosure on fracking chemicals. If regulators think they lack the authority to order such disclosure, then the Legislature will need to pass legislation to make it the law of the land.

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(c)2012 The Sacramento Bee (Sacramento, Calif.)

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

EPA Releases Progress Report on Hydraulic Fracturing Study
Valve Magazine - Online

12/26/2012

In 2011, the EPA began research under its Plan to Study the Potential Impacts of Hydraulic Fracturing on Drinking Water Resources. The purpose of the study is to assess the potential impacts of hydraulic fracturing on drinking water resources, if any, and to identify the driving factors that may affect the severity and frequency of such impacts. Scientists are focusing primarily on hydraulic fracturing of shale formations to extract natural gas, with some study of other oil- and gas-producing formations, including tight sands, and coalbeds.

The EPA has designed the scope of the research around five stages of the hydraulic fracturing water cycle. Each stage of the cycle is associated with a primary research question:

Water acquisition: impacts of large volume water withdrawals from ground and surface waters on drinking water resources?

Chemical mixing: impacts of hydraulic fracturing fluid surface spills on or near well pads on drinking water resources?

Well injection: impacts of the injection and fracturing process on drinking water resources?

Flowback and produced water: What are the possible impacts of flowback and produced water (collectively referred to as "hydraulic fracturing wastewater") surface spills on or near well pads on drinking water resources?

Wastewater treatment and waste disposal: What are the possible impacts of inadequate treatment of hydraulic fracturing wastewater on drinking water resources?

Data from multiple sources have been obtained for review and analysis.

Many of the data come directly from the oil and gas industry and states with high levels of oil and gas activity.

Information on the chemicals and practices used in hydraulic fracturing has been collected from nine companies that hydraulically fractured a total of 24,925 wells between September 2009 and October 2010.

Additional data on chemicals and water use for hydraulic fracturing are being pulled from over 12,000 well-specific chemical disclosures in FracFocus, a national hydraulic fracturing chemical registry operated by the Ground Water Protection Council and the Interstate Oil and Gas Compact Commisson.

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The New Robber Barons
New Media Journal

12/26/2012

An oil and natural gas boom is underway in the United States, born of horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracturing, or "fracking." It has created tens of thousands of well-paying jobs directly, and hundreds of thousands more in hundreds of businesses that supply and support the industry and its workers.

In North Dakota, the unemployment rate is 2.4 percent, in large part because of a huge increase in natural gas and crude oil production from deep shale rocks that yielded nothing prior to fracking. The new technology is also driving job growth, higher incomes, and increased tax revenues for hard-pressed state and local governments in Louisiana, Pennsylvania, Texas and other states.

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However, as the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research has made clear, these enormous benefits "are at risk if new restrictions are imposed on the industry, from delays in approval of liquid natural gas exports, to opposition to expanding

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ports for coal and gas export, to opposition to pipelines and refineries, and to the threat of redundant federal regulations on the technology of hydraulic fracturing." Worse, foregoing these enormous benefits would bring little or no improvement to the environment or human welfare.

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2012 Texas Air Quality: A Year In Review
Environmental Defense Solutions - Online

12/26/2012

As we come to the end of another year, we reflect on all that has happened in the world of Texas air quality. This year has brought new challenges and reminded us of how much remains to be done in the quest for healthier air across the state. Our work is critical to the millions of those who are especially vulnerable to the harms of air pollution.

I'd like to thank my fellow bloggers for another outstanding year in helping to highlight the air quality issues of 2012 and for the continued support of all of our readers. We look forward to bringing you more news and views in 2013. Wishing you and your family a happy, healthy, and prosperous New Year!

(Published: December 14, 2012)

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released updated standards for fine particulate matter (PM2.5), often referred to as "soot" (although it actually comprises a broader array of fine particles). Fine particulate pollution in the air we breathe — some of it directly emitted from cars and trucks, some of it resulting from factories and electric power plants hundreds of miles upwind – can lodge in the lungs and cause a variety of respiratory and pulmonary disease, especially in children and seniors. EDF praised the move, which will help secure healthy air for millions of Americans, including those in Houston where existing soot levels already exceed the new limits.

The State of Texas And TCEQ Fight Against Cleaner Air For Texans (Published: November 28, 2012)

The State of Texas and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) once again fight against clean air rules that will save Texans' lives. This time, it was the first-ever standards limiting the amount of mercury and other toxics power plants could emit. The Mercury and Air Toxics Standards (MATS) will ensure that 90 percent of the mercury content in coal burned by power plants is not released into our air. TCEQ, the Texas attorney general, and others challenged the standards in court, saying that the toxic pollutants covered by the mercury standards do not "pose public health hazards." The reality is that power plants in the U.S. are a major source of many toxics such as mercury, arsenic, chromium, acid gas, and nickel. A report EDF released last year demonstrated that Texas had an oversized share of the top mercury emitting coal plants in the U.S. in 2009. We called on TCEQ and the state of Texas to stand up to harmful pollution instead of standing in the way of public health protections.

New School Bus Report Highlights Progress On Clean Bus Programs In Texas (Published: November 26, 2012)

Clean school bus programs in Texas made significant progress toward improving air quality on our state's school buses, though much work remains to be done according to an EDF analysis: "Review of Texas' Clean School Bus Programs: How Far Have We Come and What Is Still Left to Do?" The report highlighted the efforts of state and regional programs in administering clean bus programs, and detailed the progress made with retrofits and replacements. With momentum from successes to date, the EDF report recommended that communities, ISDs, and government officials carry on the clean school bus momentum by continuing to seek funding for these types of projects; completing existing clean school bus projects; and investing in these projects through budget and legislative funding allocations. Again, work remains to be done to protect the health of Texas children and improve the air quality in and around school buses – until all of Texas' oldest buses are either replaced or retrofitted.

Drayage Loan Program In Houston Begins New Chapter (Published: November 1, 2012)

Since 2009, the Drayage Loan Program (DLP) has worked to replace older, more polluting trucks in the Houston area

with newer, cleaner trucks by providing critical funding and support to local independent owner operators and drayage fleets. The innovative program, administered by the Houston-Galveston Area Council and supported by the Port of Houston Authority, Environmental Defense Fund, and numerous drayage companies and truck dealerships, combines low-interest loans and substantial grants to fund the fleet turnover. The effort led to the successful replacement of 138 drayage trucks, engaged numerous drivers and carriers, and spent nearly the entire original EPA SmartWay grant. At full implementation, the program is expected to eliminate 1,638 tons of nitrogen oxide, 26.7 tons of particulate matter, and 3,636 tons of carbon dioxide. This represented an important step toward reducing air pollution in the Houston area.

Natural Gas: A Question Of Sustainability (Published: October 11, 2012)

With around 45,000 shale gas wells operating in the United States – triple the number in 2005 – people are rightfully concerned about the extent of the shale boom's potential damage to the environment. The issue became the focal point of discussion during "Can Natural Gas Be Sustainable?," a five-person panel presentation at the second annual SXSW Eco conference in Austin. As part of the panel, we discussed how stronger standards and employing best practices could minimize impacts of increased natural gas production in the wake of growing public concern about the health and environmental impacts of drilling. EDF continues to address the key problem areas associated with natural gas development: exposure to toxic chemicals and waste products; faulty well construction and design; climate impacts from methane leakage; local and regional air pollution; and land use and community impacts.

Divided Court Blocks Vital Clean Air Protections (Published: August 21, 2012)

Clean air protections were threatened with a U.S. Court of Appeals decision against EPA's cross-state air pollution rule (CSAPR). The rule estimated to reduce power plant emissions across state boundaries, saving up to 34,000 lives each year, preventing 15,000 heart attacks and 400,000 asthma attacks, and providing $120 to $280 billion in annual health benefits for the nation. Issued under the "Good Neighbor" protections of the Clean Air Act, CSAPR would have reduced power plant sulfur dioxide emissions by 73 percent and oxides of nitrogen by 54 percent from 2005 levels across 27 eastern states and the District of Columbia. The ruling changed little about the facts on the ground in Texas. That is, cross-state air pollution from Texas will still be regulated under the – albeit somewhat weaker – Clean Air Interstate Rule (CAIR) adopted in 2005 during the Bush administration. Texas power plants must therefore comply with both the first phase of the CAIR that took effect in 2010 and the second-phase reductions that are required in 2015.

Texas Sunset Commission Identifies Major Opportunities for Improvement At The Port Of Houston (Published: August 13, 2012)

In a much-anticipated report on the management of the Port of Houston Authority (PHA), the Sunset Commission, as directed by the Texas legislature, identified several opportunities to improve aspects of port management, including accountability and stakeholder trust. The 95-page report includes a series of recommendations for improvement in a number of basic management and fiduciary areas at the port. While the report reaffirmed the Authority's ongoing "responsibility as a government agency," it also highlighted a pervasive "lack of accountability." Understanding that the port is a unique institution, PHA is criticized in the report for not following a number of best practices in either the private or public sector. As EDF continues to work in partnership with PHA to reduce emissions from oceangoing vessels, trains, cargo handling equipment, and port trucks and improve Houston air quality, we were encouraged by this report's findings and recommendations. These reforms will also make PHA stronger and better equipped to handle the inevitable diverse pressures over the next several years.

Exposure to Fine Particulates And Other Air Emissions For Shale Gas Workers (Published: August 8, 2012)

The potential health impacts to workers who daily toil in and around the hundreds of drilling sites were highlighted in a National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) Hazard Alert, identifying exposure to airborne silica as a health hazard to workers conducting hydraulic fracturing operations during recent field studies. NIOSH is working to

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identify other potential health risks at drilling sites, acknowledging that there is a real lack of information on occupational dust and chemical exposures in this industry. However, silica is just one of several chemicals used during the hydraulic fracturing process that can pose hazards at well sites, according to State Impact.

Court Upholds Sulfur Dioxide Standards (Published: July 25, 2012)

Thanks to a federal appeals court decision, EPA's health-based air quality standards for sulfur dioxide (SO2) will stand firm. These National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for SO2 will improve health protections, especially for children, the elderly and individuals with asthma. EDF Attorney Peter Zalzal praised the decision saying it "strongly affirms that EPA's clean air protections addressing dangerous sulfur dioxide are firmly grounded in science and the law."

Do Shale Gas Activities Play A Role In Rising Ozone Levels? (Published: July 10, 2012)

The annual Texas smog season – April through October – appeared in full swing this year with numerous counties around the state exceeding health-based ozone concentrations many times since March. Ozone-forming pollution is emitted by cars, refineries and various industrial plants. As more Texans began to see shale gas drilling rigs pop up around them, many asked the question: Could emissions from natural gas and oil operations significantly contribute to ground-level ozone? The answer was an unequivocal yes.

Court Upholds Historic EPA Actions, Rebukes Texas' Lawsuits To Undermine Health Protections (Published: June 26, 2012)

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuitissued a unanimous opinion affirming EPA's protective carbon pollution standards issued under the Clean Air Act. The Court upheld EPA's science-based finding that greenhouse gas emissions endanger public health and welfare and the Clean Car Standards. The court also dismissed petitions challenging the requirement for large industrial sources to install modern cost-effective solutions to address greenhouse gases and EPA's common sense approach to inoculate small sources. Today's ruling underscored what we have long known — that EPA's climate protections are firmly grounded in science and law and will help secure a healthier, more prosperous future for all Americans.

Diesel Emissions Officially Classified as Carcinogenic (Published: June 18, 2012)

Though the cancer risks from exposure to diesel emissions have been known for many years, the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), a part of the World Health Organization (WHO), officially announced that diesel emissions were carcinogenic to humans. The agency cited the robust body of scientific literature on the issue and stated that diesel emissions were associated with lung cancer and bladder cancer. WHO estimates that cancer kills 7.6 million people worldwide, and is the leading cause of death globally in 2008. Of all cancers, lung cancer is the most lethal, and accounted for 18 percent of all cancer deaths, the agency said.

EPA Rolls Out New Online Tool that Discloses Major Sources of Climate Pollution (Published: January 11, 2012)

EPA released a new online tool which provides data about pollution emissions for the country's largest industrial emitters of greenhouse gases. Together, these industry sources are responsible for billions of tons of climate disrupting pollution. This will be the first time that this data is publicly available and will inform Americans about the heat-trapping greenhouse gases emitted in their communities. EDF attorney Peter Zalzal summed up our enthusiasm for this new tool: "Americans have a right to know about the pollution in their air. This greenhouse gas emissions data promotes transparency and provides a strong foundation for Americans to work together in deploying smart climate policies."

This entry was posted in Air Pollution, Clean Air Act, Clean school buses, Diesel engines, Environmental Protection Agency, Houston, Natural gas, PM2.5, Ports, TCEQ. Bookmark the . or leave a trackback: Trackback URL.

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Advocating for cleaner, healthier air in Texas through public education and policy influence.

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News

NEWS02

By Steve Hargreaves, CNN

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Hollywood films take on fracking
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12/26/2012

Wed, 26 Dec 2012 12:30:00 GMT | By Reuters

Hollywood films take on fracking

Gus Van Sant's upcoming Hollywood film 'Promised Land', starring Matt Damon, puts the spotlight on fracking.

Reuters

New York: Not so long ago, fracking was a technical term little known beyond the energy industry. Now it's coming to Hollywood, as the fierce battle between environmentalists and oil firms is played out in several forthcoming films.

Hydraulic fracturing, the controversial drilling technique also known as fracking, has lifted U.S. energy output dramatically, despite warnings from critics who fear it pollutes water deep underground.

Any shift in public opinion could impact policy - and huge sums in energy spending - since drilling regulations are under review by the Obama administration and local officials around the country. The high stakes involve a range of issues from U.S. energy independence, to protection of drinking water.

Both sides are using movies to try to win the debate, though actor Matt Damon says viewers should not assume the movie he stars in, 'Promised Land', is "a rabid anti-fracking polemic."

In the film, Damon plays a gas company landman - an agent who buys or leases land - intent on drilling beneath a town where some residents are concerned about the perils of fracking. As the landman gets to know the townspeople, he suffers a crisis of conscience.

In an interview in Los Angeles, Damon said he worries that viewers will wrongly assume the film is one-sided and not see it. He declined to offer his personal view on fracking. "That's not the point. The point is that (the film) should start a conversation."

The Northern Irish director Phelim McAleer's documentary, 'FrackNation', is an unabashedly pro-drilling mantra set to air next month on AXS TV, the cable network controlled by Dallas Mavericks owner and media mogul Mark Cuban.

McAleer views fracking as "the best thing ever," a potential savior for the U.S. economy, unless the forces he likes to call "Big Enviro" succeed in derailing it.

On the other side of the argument, HBO, the cable pay channel, could air a sequel to 'Gasland', a scathing 2010 documentary from director Josh Fox, as early as next year.

The original film featured scenes of tap water erupting into flames and mobilized environmental groups against fracking, drawing full-throated rebuttals from an oil industry that says the process has never caused water problems.

Fox declined comment for this article.

Amid the showdown, both industry and anti-fracking camps have mounted major campaigns to sway hearts and minds.

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"It could become the biggest environmental debate of our time," said Robert McNally, an energy policy expert and former White House adviser under George W. Bush. "Hollywood is taking notice, and the industry will have its work cut out for it to defend fracking."

Nearly four out of ten Americans surveyed by the Pew Research Center early this year said they knew nothing about fracking. Other polls show most Americans familiar with the practice believe fracking offers economic benefits but requires tougher regulation.

This year, for the first time, U.S. online searches for the term "fracking" became more popular than "climate change," Google data showed. Fracking has doubled on Google's popularity index since last year, and while "global warming" still draws more hits, the gap is narrowing.

Drinking water contamination is the leading environmental concern among Americans, according to Gallup polling data. A Bloomberg National Poll this month showed that 66 percent of Americans want more fracking regulation, up from 56 percent in September.

'POUNDING THE ZONE'

Whether 'Promised Land' will shift public opinion is uncertain. But films with environmental themes often can, according to Joseph Cappella, a professor of communications at the University of Pennsylvania.

Past examples include Al Gore's 'An Inconvenient Truth' on climate change, and 'Erin Brockovich', a dramatization of real events in which actress Julia Roberts played a legal clerk who uncovers water contamination by a California power company.

Ahead of the release of 'Promised Land', some within the oil industry are already reading the film's script online.

"Look, I don't want to whistle past the graveyard. This film is going to be a challenge, and we'll just have to see how it does on opening weekend," said Chris Tucker of pro-drilling group Energy In Depth (EID), which is funded by industry. "In terms of popularization of the issue, it will have an effect."

The oil industry wants to avoid another blow like the one it took from Fox's 2010 'Gasland' film. Google search data shows online interest in fracking surged immediately afterwards.

For three years, Tucker has been working with other communications experts, "pounding the zone with facts" to counter what he calls false claims in "Gasland" and to promote drilling.

Films like 'Promised Land' will get people curious and send them searching online, said Tucker, where he worries the term 'fracking' gets a bad rap. "People will go home and Google it, and the other side does really well on Google," he said.

EID released its own pro-drilling film, 'Truthland', this year, dubbing it "the factual alternative to Gasland."

LOSING PR BATTLE?

In some ways, the film blitz may be behind the times. Fracking has already come to dominate U.S. drilling over the last half-decade: Onshore rigs doing so-called unconventional drilling account for nearly two-thirds of the total.

Tucker and industry officials are regulars at conferences, in newspaper op-ed articles, and on TV to defend drilling.

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On the environmentalist side, Fox travels widely to lead anti-fracking rallies, sometimes rousing crowds by playing a banjo, which is also featured in the Gasland soundtrack. He has enlisted help from artists including Yoko Ono and Sean Lennon.

"The lesson of 'Gasland' is that public perception is a very big part of the equation," said Jonathan Wood, a political risk analyst at London-based Control Risks, whose clients include oil companies.

In a report this month, Wood wrote that the industry has "largely failed to appreciate social and political risks, and has repeatedly been caught off guard by the sophistication, speed and influence of anti-fracking activists."

Hydraulic fracturing entails pumping water laced with chemicals and sand at high pressure into shale rock formations to break them up and unleash hydrocarbons.

The minerals are trapped thousands of feet below water tables, but critics worry that fracking fluids or hydrocarbons can still leak into water tables from wells, or above ground. Among their other concerns: fracking-related earthquakes, and growing dependence on fossil fuels.

The United States now rivals Russia as the world's top gas producer, in large part due to fracking, and has stemmed a long decline in oil output, which stands at an 18-year high near 7 million barrels a day.

So far, the Obama administration has cautiously endorsed the new drilling, but the U.S. Department of Interior is working on new fracking rules on public lands starting next year.

Some drillers have faced fracking-related fines for water contamination due to spilled fracking fluid. Last year, after sampling water in rural Pavillion, Wyoming, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) presented the first-ever U.S. government finding of a potential link between fracking and water contamination.

More broadly, however, the EPA condones fracking on safety grounds. But unlike the growing consensus among climate scientists linking global warming and industrial activity, there is no consensus that fracking poses a danger. Unconventional drilling has surged only over the last half decade.

The EPA will release an in-depth study on fracking's potential impacts on water supplies in 2014.

Tough economic times can widen support for drilling. A national Gallup poll this year showed that more Americans favored prioritizing economic growth over the protection of the environment (49 percent versus 41 percent).

That's a reversal from 2007, when 55 percent favored environmental protection.

Cuban is betting the hot potato issue will draw viewers to "FrackNation" on his cable channel.

"Op-Ed-umentaries like this are supposed to make people think about the topic, which is always a good thing," he said.

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Up Next

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EPA Releases Update On Ongoing Hydraulic Fracturing Study
Water Online

12/26/2012

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December 21, 2012

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently provided an update on its ongoing national study currently underway to better understand any potential impacts of hydraulic fracturing on drinking water resources. Results of the study, which Congress requested EPA to complete, are expected to be released in a draft for public and peer review in 2014. The update provided today outlines work currently underway, including the status of research projects that will inform the final study. It is important to note that while this progress report outlines the framework for the final study, it does not draw conclusions about the potential impacts of hydraulic fracturing on drinking water resources, which will be made in the final study.

As the administration and EPA has made clear, natural gas has a central role to play in our energy future, and this important domestic fuel source has extensive economic, energy security, and environmental benefits. The study EPA is currently undertaking is part of EPA's focus to ensure that as the Administration continues to work to expand production of this important domestic resource safely and responsibly.

Among the information released today are updates on 18 research projects and details on the agency's research approach as well as next steps for these ongoing projects and analyses. Today's update follows the public release, in November 2011, of the agency's final study plan, which underwent scientific peer review and public comment.

EPA has engaged stakeholders, including industry, to ensure that the study reflects current practices in hydraulic fracturing. EPA continues to request data and information from the public and stakeholders and has put out a formal request for information which can be accessed through the federal register at:
https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2012/11/09/2012-27452/r equest-for-information-to-inform-hydraulic-fracturing-research-related-to-drinking-water-resources

EPA also expects to release a draft report of results from the study in late 2014. The study has been designated a Highly Influential Scientific Assessment, meaning it will receive the highest level of peer review in accordance with EPA's peer review handbook before it is finalized. The 2014 draft report will synthesize the results from the ongoing projects together with the scientific literature to answer the study's main research questions.

EPA's Science Advisory Board (SAB) is forming a panel of independent experts which will review and provide their individual input on the ongoing study to EPA.The SAB will provide an opportunity for the public to offer comments for consideration by the individual panel members. For more information, visit
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For more information, visit www.epa.gov/hfstudy.

SOURCE: Environmental Protection Agency

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

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EPA releases update on ongoing hydraulic fracturing study
Floyd County Times - Online

12/26/2012

EPA releases update on ongoing hydraulic fracturing study

Floyd County Times (Ky)

1 hr 16 mins ago | 11 views | 0

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WASHINGTON - The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency provided an update last week on its ongoing national study currently underway to better understand any potential impacts of hydraulic fracturing on drinking water resources.

Results of the study, which Congress requested EPA to complete, are expected to be released in a draft for public and peer review in 2014. The update provided Dec. 21 outlines work currently underway, including the status of research projects that will inform the final study. It is important to note that while this progress report outlines the framework for the final study, it does not draw conclusions about the potential impacts of hydraulic fracturing on drinking water resources, which will be made in the final study.

As the administration and EPA has made clear, natural gas has a central role to play in our energy future, and this important domestic fuel source has extensive economic, energy security, and environmental benefits. The study EPA is currently undertaking is part of EPA's focus to ensure that as the Administration continues to work to expand production of this important domestic resource safely and responsibly.

Among the information released today are updates on 18 research projects and details on the agency's research approach as well as next steps for these ongoing projects and analyses. Today's update follows the public release, in November 2011, of the agency's final study plan, which underwent scientific peer review and public comment.

EPA has engaged stakeholders, including industry, to ensure that the study reflects current practices in hydraulic fracturing. EPA continues to request data and information from the public and stakeholders and has put out a formal request for information which can be accessed through the federal register at: https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2012/11/09/2012-27452/r equest-for-information-to-inform-hydraulic-fracturing-research-related-to-drinking-water-resources.

EPA also expects to release a draft report of results from the study in late 2014. The study has been designated a Highly Influential Scientific Assessment, meaning it will receive the highest level of peer review in accordance with EPA's peer review handbook before it is finalized. The 2014 draft report will synthesize the results from the ongoing projects together with the scientific literature to answer the study's main research questions.

EPA's Science Advisory Board (SAB) is forming a panel of independent experts which will review and provide their individual input on the ongoing study to EPA. The SAB will provide an opportunity for the public to offer comments for consideration by the individual panel members. For more information on the SAB process, please visit: http://yosemite.epa.gov/sab/sabpeople.nsf/WebCommittees/BOARD.

For more information, see www.epa.gov/hfstudy.

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INHOFE REACTS TO EPA'S HYDRAULIC FRACTURING PROGRESS REPORT
Bignews.biz

12/25/2012

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Reading: INHOFE REACTS TO EPA'S HYDRAULIC FRACTURING PROGRESS REPORT

BigNews.Biz - Dec 25,2012 - INHOFE REACTS TO EPA'S HYDRAULIC FRACTURING PROGRESS REPORT

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Sen. Jim Inhofe (R-Okla.), Ranking Member of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, made the following statement on the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) hydraulic fracturing progress report:

"The release by EPA of its progress report on its study of the potential impacts of hydraulic fracturing on drinking water is more proof that the Administration is not in search of truth, but rather for justification to regulate hydraulic fracturing and cripple the oil and gas industry," said Inhofe. "The Obama Administration has been looking for this justification since Inauguration Day, and I have no doubt that the President will continue to do this for the sake of his environmental agenda.

"The truth is that state based regulations have ensured that hydraulic fracturing is done in a way that is safe and responsible while also allowing access to oil and natural gas in tight formations, which is the key to continuing the boom in U.S. oil and gas production. With great resources being produced by groups like the Ground Water Protection Council, states are able to work effectively with industry to ensure the appropriate balance of environmental stewardship and energy production is met on a day-to-day basis. This has been the case since the practice first began near Duncan, Oklahoma in 1949.

"I am concerned that the study being conducted by the EPA has expanded beyond the scope of the Congressional request, and that the EPA has used this opportunity to release an expansive list of the chemicals used in the hydraulic fracturing process without any context whatsoever. Without any explanation about why, how, and to what extent these chemicals have been used by the industry, this list is fodder for environmental groups to mount a scare campaign against the American public. My fear is that the EPA will simply design their computer models to give them the outcomes they desire."

"We must remember that this is the same EPA that compared its enforcement mechanisms to Roman occupiers who crucified the first five men they saw in a new territory to guarantee civil obedience. It is also the same EPA that aggressively and carelessly tried to link hydraulic fracturing to groundwater contamination in Wyoming, Pennsylvania, and in Texas, and came up empty handed each time. Why should anyone expect me to trust their 'science' now?"

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Mike Paque, executive director of the Ground Water Protection Council, added: “We hope the EPA will involve our state regulatory agencies in the next phase of the study and stand ready to assist EPA in the use and interpretation of any data from FracFocus Version 2.0.”

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INSIGHT-In fracking culture war, celebs, billionaires and banjos
CNBC - Online

12/25/2012

By: Joshua Schneyer and Edward McAllister

* 'Fracking' overtakes 'Climate Change' in Google searches

* Actor Matt Damon brings fracking to Hollywood

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(Reporting By Joshua Schneyer and Edward McAllister in New York; Additional reporting by Zorianna Kit in Los Angeles; Editing by Jeffrey Benkoe)

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FACTBOX-U.S. EPA studies five ways fracking may affect water
CNBC - Online

12/25/2012

Dec 21 (Reuters) - The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's landmark study into the effects of hydraulic fracturing drilling technology on water supply is examining the issue from five different angles. The study, which may prove pivotal in the government's regulation of the 'fracking' technology that has unlocked generations' worth of U.S. oil and gas supplies, won't be released for public comment and peer review until 2014, but its framework was released in detail on Friday. For the full report: http://r.reuters.com/jec84t These are the five stages of the hydraulic fracturing water cycle being examined:

Water Use in Fracturing Operations

Hydraulic Potential Drinking Water Issues

Water Water Availability Acquisition Impact of water withdrawal on water quality Chemical Mixing Release to surface and ground water

(eg onsite spills and/or leaks) Chemical transportation accidents

Well Injection Accidental release to ground or surface water (eg, well

malfunctions) Fracturing fluid migration into drinking water aquifers Formation fluid displacement into aquifers Mobilization of subsurface formation materials into aquifers

Flowback and Release to surface and ground water Produced Water Leakage from onsite storage into drinking water resources

Improper pit construction, maintenance, and/or closure

Wastewater Surface and/or subsurface discharge into surface and Treatment and ground water Waste Disposal Incomplete treatment of wastewater and solid residuals

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UPDATED EPA Progress Report on Hydraulic Fracturing Reveals Obvious, Little Else NorthCentralPA.com

12/25/2012

The EPA has issued a 278-page progress report on its gigantic hydraulic fracturing study due for completion in 2014 or thereabouts. The interim report offered a multitude of words one assumes are intended to obscure the ultimate direction of the report. Nonetheless, there are some interesting aspects to the report and, to be fair, the [...]

Read the full article here: *UPDATED* EPA Progress Report on Hydraulic Fracturing Reveals Obvious, Little Else

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

Fracking war comes to Hollywood
Arab Times

12/25/2012

Merry Christmas to all

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Read By: 207

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

Insight: In fracking culture war, celebs, billionaires and banjos

Reuters - Online
New York, NY
Joshua Schneyer
12/25/2012

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

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(Reporting By Joshua Schneyer and Edward McAllister in New York; Additional reporting by Zorianna Kit in Los Angeles; Editing by Jeffrey Benkoe)

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

Here's Every County In The Country That's Getting Fracked
Business Insider

12/25/2012

The EPA released a new study on Friday called, "Study of the Potential Impacts of Hydraulic Fracturing on Drinking Water Resources: Progress Report" (via Russell Gold and Matt Smith).

The title is misleading — it should probably have been called "A Progress Report Of The Study..." because it's basically an update of a megastudy on fracking's impact that will not come out for years and doesn't draw any conclusions.

But it does contain a cool graphic showing all the counties where fracking is occurring:

EPA

The takeaway: half of all states are seeing fracking activity — even Washington.

So the results of the megastudy are going to affect more than just the states we consider oil giants.

SEE MORE: All The Reasons You Should Consider Letting A Company Frack Your Backyard >

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

In fracking culture war, celebs, billionaires and banjos
Utility Products Magazine - Online

12/25/2012

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Hydraulic fracturing, the controversial drilling technique also known as fracking, has lifted U.S. energy output dramatically, despite warnings from critics who fear it pollutes water deep underground.

Any shift in public opinion could impact policy - and huge sums in energy spending - since drilling regulations are under review by the Obama administration and local officials around the country. The high stakes involve a range of issues from U.S. energy independence, to protection of drinking water.

Both sides are using movies to try to win the debate, though actor Matt Damon says viewers should not assume the movie he stars in, "Promised Land," is "a rabid anti-fracking polemic." In the film, Damon plays a gas company landman - an agent who buys or leases land - intent on drilling beneath a town where some residents are concerned about the perils of fracking. As the landman gets to know the townspeople, he suffers a crisis of conscience.

In an interview in Los Angeles, Damon said he worries that viewers will wrongly assume the film is one-sided and not see it. He declined to offer his personal view on fracking. "That's not the point. The point is that (the film) should start a conversation." The Northern Irish director Phelim McAleer's documentary, "FrackNation," is an unabashedly pro-drilling mantra set to air next month on AXS TV, the cable network controlled by Dallas Mavericks owner and media mogul Mark Cuban.

McAleer views fracking as "the best thing ever," a potential savior for the U.S. economy, unless the forces he likes to call "Big Enviro" succeed in derailing it.

On the other side of the argument, HBO, the cable pay channel, could air a sequel to "Gasland," a scathing 2010 documentary from director Josh Fox, as early as next year.

The original film featured scenes of tap water erupting into flames and mobilized environmental groups against fracking, drawing full-throated rebuttals from an oil industry that says the process has never caused water problems.

Fox declined comment for this article.

Amid the showdown, both industry and anti-fracking camps have mounted major campaigns to sway hearts and minds.

"It could become the biggest environmental debate of our time," said Robert McNally, an energy policy expert and former White House adviser under George W. Bush. "Hollywood is taking notice, and the industry will have its work cut out for it to defend fracking." Nearly four out of ten Americans surveyed by the Pew Research Center early this year said they knew nothing about fracking. Other polls show most Americans familiar with the practice believe fracking offers economic benefits but requires tougher regulation.

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

Drinking water contamination is the leading environmental concern among Americans, according to Gallup polling data. A Bloomberg National Poll this month showed that 66 percent of Americans want more fracking regulation, up from 56 percent in September.

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

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Electric Light and Power

12/24/2012

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

EPA's CHRISTMAS GIFT - FRACKING REPORT & Interactive Map to View EACH Fracking Well Info
DAILY KOS

12/24/2012

Before we get excited here, this is the EPA's "Progress Report" which will be followed by further studies, yaddy yadda yadda. In short, by the time all the designated experts chime in, it will be too late in my opinion.

You see, I know people working in the fracking fields. I know that liners for fracking waste water leaks. I know they wear dossimeters to make sure they aren't exposed to too much radiation. I know trucks crash and spill the toxic waste on road sides. I know wells fail and spew oil spills. Anyone who knows people working in the fields can confirm what a mess it is out there.

That said I am CALLING ALL SCIENTISTS here on DKos to read through this first stage of EPA's just released

Actually EPA completed a report on August 14, 2011* (professionals from the Yucca Mountain project assisted). I'm not sure if or whether the 2011 report impacts last week's report. More on the 2011 report below.

From EPAs 2012 report:

In 2011, the EPA began research under its Plan to Study the Potential Impacts of Hydraulic Fracturing on Drinking Water Resources. The purpose of the study is to assess the potential impacts of hydraulic fracturing on drinking water resources, if any, and to identify the driving factors that may affect the severity and frequency of such impacts. Scientists are focusing primarily on hydraulic fracturing of shale formations to extract natural gas, with some study of other oil- and gas-producing formations, including tight sands, and coalbeds.

The EPA has designed the scope of the research around five stages of the hydraulic fracturing water cycle. Each stage of the cycle is associated with a primary research question:

Water acquisition: impacts of large volume water withdrawals from ground and surface waters on drinking water resources?

Chemical mixing: impacts of hydraulic fracturing fluid surface spills on or near well pads on drinking water resources?

Well injection: impacts of the injection and fracturing process on drinking water resources?

Flowback and produced water: What are the possible impacts of flowback and produced water (collectively referred to as “hydraulic fracturing wastewater”) surface spills on or near well pads on drinking water resources?

Wastewater treatment and waste disposal: What are the possible impacts of inadequate treatment of hydraulic fracturing wastewater on drinking water resources?

YES, there are hopes, even designs, of fracking water treatment plants producing water that can be released back into the area.

The baselines for the study are quite limited, as if the variables for what could go wrong are not infinite in scope:

Data from multiple sources have been obtained for review and analysis.

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

Many of the data come directly from the oil and gas industry and states with high levels of oil and gas activity.

Information on the chemicals and practices used in hydraulic fracturing has been collected from nine companies that hydraulically fractured a total of 24,925 wells between September 2009 and October 2010.

Additional data on chemicals and water use for hydraulic fracturing are being pulled from over 12,000 well-specific chemical disclosures in FracFocus, a national hydraulic fracturing chemical registry operated by the Ground Water Protection Council and the Interstate Oil and Gas Compact Commisson.

Only nine companies? Good grief! Which companies?

Here's the list of companies operating in just North Dakota, from a state website.

There are a lot more than nine companies listed.

I think anyone with common sense knows the inherent danger of destroying water in the fracking process. It takes millions of gallons of water that is mixed with a chemical cocktail to drill each well!

We also know that the economy of North Dakota will tank if any proof of contamination is reported by the EPA. No danger of that happening right away. By the time the EPA and the industry experts massage the information, the drillers and hoards of workers will have moved on to new territory to drill baby drill, turning the USA into swiss cheese.

What could possibly go wrong?

The Sierra Club tries to answer that question in this article

The six reservoirs along the river currently provide water storage primarily for flood control, reservoir recreation and releases for navigation. But the Corps' recent notice proposes that portions of the reservoir space be available for purchase by industry. That industry is assumed to include major demands from fracking interests. Is there any question that the Missouri River is already providing millions and millions of gallons of water for fracking in North Dakota?

*** M U S T S E E ** SOME FRACKING CHEMICALS REVEALED 2011

AGAIN, CALLING ALL SCIENTISTS - The EPA has done some work already. In this document there is a list of fracking components.

In this document this list of fracking chemicals is included on pages 41 - 42:

Well it's nice to see one FRACKING FLUID REPORT.

*** M U S T S E E ***

In the 2012 EPA report the list of FRACKING FLUID COMPONENTS can be found on pags 194 - 244

Check them out.

* I N T E R A C T I V E MAP OF FRACKING WELL LOCATION & COMPANY **

Also this is an amazing amount of work:

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

Someone has created a Google Earth map of FRACKING WELLS. This is interative.

Open this website: http://climateviewer.com/...

Click on FRACKING AMERICA and wait for the Green discs to appear

Just above the upper left bar that says EARTH, MOON, MARS etc, CLICK on the red Joy Stick to the right so the NAVIGATION TOOLS will appear.

In the upper right hand corner, you can click on the first icon on the left to get rid of whatever that guys name is playing Dr. Evil.

Then zoom in and you will find the DETAILED INFORMATION for each well.

As importantly, and more sadly, and especially in North Dakota, you will see that fracking wells are literally along the banks of the Missouri River and the huge reservoirs behind the dams controlling the flow of the great Missouri.

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

Latest Pennsylvania business
WCBD-TV - Online

12/24/2012

PENNSYLVANIA LOTTERY-PRIVATIZATION

AP: Anti-gambling lawmaker voices lottery concerns

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) A key anti-gambling state legislator is cautioning Gov. Tom Corbett against accepting a bid from a British firm to manage the $3.5 billion Pennsylvania Lottery without addressing lawmakers' concerns.

Bucks County Rep. Paul Clymer wrote to Corbett on Thursday. The letter was obtained by The Associated Press.

Until now, Republicans have been largely quiet about Corbett's exploration of hiring Camelot Global Services as a private lottery manager.

Clymer says he's concerned Camelot will usher in a gambling expansion that could further hurt families. Clymer also says such a gambling expansion require lawmakers' approval.

Administration officials say they have the authority to expand lottery gambling, and Corbett says he'll only hire Camelot if he believes the company can bring in more lottery profit than the state employees who currently run it.

SCHOOL SHOOTING-SCHOLARSHIPS

Newtown siblings offered Pa. college scholarships

CHESTER, Pa. (AP) A college in suburban Philadelphia is offering four full scholarships to siblings and dependents of the Connecticut school shooting victims.

Widener University announced Friday that three scholarships are being funded by alumnus Dan Borislow, a telecommunications executive.

Widener President James Harris III said Borislow's generosity prompted the university to sponsor a fourth scholarship.

The grants are being made available to siblings of the 20 first-graders gunned down at Sandy Hook Elementary last week. Dependents of six adult victims are also eligible.

The scholarships will be available for up to 20 years, or until all four are awarded.

The applicants must first be accepted to the university in Chester, Pa. The funds will cover tuition and room and board for four years.

PENNSYLVANIA JOBS

Pa. reports largest drop in jobless rate since '83

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) Pennsylvania is reporting the biggest monthly drop in joblessness in nearly 30 years, although a separate survey of employers in November showed only a slight increase in payrolls.

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

The state Department of Labor and Industry said Friday the unemployment rate dropped to 7.8 percent from 8.1 percent, the largest drop since 1983. It was the second monthly drop after a six-month run-up.

The national unemployment rate is 7.7 percent.

A survey of Pennsylvania employers found payrolls inched up by 1,900, hovering around 5.75 million nonfarm jobs.

A separate survey of Pennsylvania households found that the number of unemployed dropped by 16,000. Employment rose by 22,000 and the number of people working or seeking work grew by 6,000.

Pennsylvania's jobless rate hit a recessionary peak of 8.7 percent in 2010.

EPA-FRACKING STUDY

EPA releases progress report on fracking study

WASHINGTON (AP) The Environmental Protection Agency has released a progress report on its research into potential impacts of natural gas hydraulic fracturing and drilling on drinking water.

The update released Friday doesn't come to any conclusions and the final report won't be released until 2014.

The EPA says information on fracking chemicals has been collected from nine companies and 24,925 wells. Computer analysis is also being done on well construction.

The EPA says it is working with scientists, the industry, and environmental groups to examine any possible impacts. Sampling at five locations in Colorado, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, and Texas has been completed, and lab studies are being done on drilling wastewater.

The industry and many states say the process is safe when done properly, but critics dispute that.

Online: http://www.epa.gov/hfstudy/

METAL PLANT FIRE

Fire damages metal plant in western Pa.

MOUNT PLEASANT, Pa. (AP) Fire officials say a blaze has damaged a metal plant in western Pennsylvania, but that workers weren't there at the time and no injuries are being reported.

A spokesman for Westmoreland County Emergency Management says the fire at EHC Industries Inc. in Mount Pleasant was fueled by chemicals and propane tanks.

Firefighters and hazardous materials crews responded to the building around 4 p.m. Friday and it was already consumed by heavy fire. After hours of battling the blaze, officials say firefighters were in the "mopping up" phase by 7:30 p.m.

Bud Miller, the owner, says he could not estimate the damage from the fire. But he says he plans to rebuild.

SOUTHERN BELTWAY

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

Turnpike extension to resume in western Pa.

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) A planned 13-mile extension of the Pennsylvania Turnpike in the southwestern corner of the state is back on the front burner.

Turnpike commission Chairman William Lieberman said Friday that work is resuming on the final design for the next leg of the so-called Southern Beltway. It will link U.S. Route 22 in eastern Washington County to Interstate 79 at the Washington-Allegheny County line.

Turnpike officials say the $632.5 million project has been stalled for lack of funding for several years, but that work is now proceeding.

Construction is scheduled to start in 2014 and it's scheduled to open around 2020.

Lieberman says the expressway will be an economic boon for the region, creating more than 20,000 full- and part-time jobs and injecting nearly $2.7 billion into the economy.

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

New films to highlight fight over fracking by oil firms, environmentalists
MSN

12/24/2012

Reuters: Jim Urquhart. Hollywood films: A fracking operation outside Williston, N.D. IMAGE

17 hr ago By Joshua Schneyer and Edward McAllister of Reuters

Hydraulic fracturing, a drilling method known as fracking, has pitted oil firms against environmentalists. Now, Hollywood joins the fray.

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

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Drinking water contamination is the leading environmental concern among Americans, according to Gallup polling data. A Bloomberg National Poll this month showed that 66 percent of Americans want more fracking regulation, up from 56 percent in September.

'POUNDING THE ZONE'

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Past examples include Al Gore's "An Inconvenient Truth" on climate change, and "Erin Brockovich," a dramatization of real events in which actress Julia Roberts played a legal clerk who uncovers water contamination by a California power company.

Ahead of the release of "Promised Land," some within the oil industry are already reading the film's script online.

"Look, I don't want to whistle past the graveyard. This film is going to be a challenge, and we'll just have to see how it does on opening weekend," said Chris Tucker of pro-drilling group Energy In Depth, which is funded by industry. "In terms of popularization of the issue, it will have an effect."

The oil industry wants to avoid another blow like the one it took from Fox's 2010 "Gasland" film. Google search data shows online interest in fracking surged immediately afterward.

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LOSING PR BATTLE?

In some ways, the film blitz may be behind the times. Fracking has already come to dominate U.S. drilling over the last half-decade: Onshore rigs doing so-called unconventional drilling account for nearly two-thirds of the total.

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More broadly, however, the EPA condones fracking on safety grounds. But unlike the growing consensus among climate scientists linking global warming and industrial activity, there is no consensus that fracking poses a danger. Unconventional drilling has surged only over the last half decade.

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Additional reporting by Zorianna Kit.

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Here's Every County In The Country That's Getting Fracked [Map]
Business Insider

12/24/2012

The EPA released a new study on Friday called, "Study of the Potential Impacts of Hydraulic Fracturing on Drinking Water Resources: Progress Report" (via Russell Gold and Matt Smith).

The title is misleading — it should probably have been called "A Progress Report Of The Study..." because it's basically an update of a megastudy on fracking's impact that will not come out for years and doesn't draw any conclusions.

But it does contain a cool graphic showing all the counties where fracking is occurring:

The takeaway: half of all states are seeing fracking activity — even Washington.

So the results of the megastudy are going to affect more than just the states we consider oil giants.

SEE MORE: All The Reasons You Should Consider Letting A Company Frack Your Backyard >

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

Promised Land reignites fracking war starring celebrities, billionaires and banjos
Financial Post - Online

12/24/2012

Not so long ago, fracking was a technical term little known beyond the energy industry. Now it's coming to Hollywood, as the fierce battle between environmentalists and oil firms is played out in several forthcoming films.

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EPA Releases Update on Hydraulic Fracturing Study
Storm Water Solutions - Online

12/24/2012

The update outlines work currently underway, including the status of research projects

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) provided an update on its ongoing national study currently underway to better understand any potential impacts of hydraulic fracturing on drinking water resources. Results of the study, which Congress requested EPA to complete, are expected to be released in a draft for public and peer review in 2014. The update outlines work currently underway, including the status of research projects that will inform the final study. It is important to note that while this progress report outlines the framework for the final study, it does not draw conclusions about the potential impacts of hydraulic fracturing on drinking water resources, which will be made in the final study.

As the administration and EPA has made clear, natural gas has a central role to play in our energy future, and this important domestic fuel source has extensive economic, energy security and environmental benefits. The study EPA is currently undertaking is part of EPA's focus to ensure that as the administration continues to work to expand production of this important domestic resource safely and responsibly.

Among the information released today are updates on 18 research projects and details on the agency's research approach as well as next steps for these ongoing projects and analyses. The update follows the public release, in November 2011, of the agency's final study plan, which underwent scientific peer review and public comment.

EPA has engaged stakeholders, including industry, to ensure that the study reflects current practices in hydraulic fracturing. EPA continues to request data and information from the public and stakeholders and has put out a formal request for information, which can be accessed through the federal register.

EPA also expects to release a draft report of results from the study in late 2014. The study has been designated a Highly Influential Scientific Assessment, meaning it will receive the highest level of peer review in accordance with EPA's peer review handbook before it is finalized. The 2014 draft report will synthesize the results from the ongoing projects together with the scientific literature to answer the study's main research questions.

EPA's Science Advisory Board (SAB) is forming a panel of independent experts, which will review and provide their individual input on the ongoing study to EPA. The SAB will provide an opportunity for the public to offer comments for consideration by the individual panel members.

Source:

U.S. EPA

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Latest Pennsylvania business
WJTV-TV - Online

12/24/2012

PENNSYLVANIA LOTTERY-PRIVATIZATION

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SCHOOL SHOOTING-SCHOLARSHIPS

Newtown siblings offered Pa. college scholarships

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PENNSYLVANIA JOBS

Pa. reports largest drop in jobless rate since '83

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) Pennsylvania is reporting the biggest monthly drop in joblessness in nearly 30 years, although a separate survey of employers in November showed only a slight increase in payrolls.

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The state Department of Labor and Industry said Friday the unemployment rate dropped to 7.8 percent from 8.1 percent, the largest drop since 1983. It was the second monthly drop after a six-month run-up.

The national unemployment rate is 7.7 percent.

A survey of Pennsylvania employers found payrolls inched up by 1,900, hovering around 5.75 million nonfarm jobs.

A separate survey of Pennsylvania households found that the number of unemployed dropped by 16,000. Employment rose by 22,000 and the number of people working or seeking work grew by 6,000.

Pennsylvania's jobless rate hit a recessionary peak of 8.7 percent in 2010.

EPA-FRACKING STUDY

EPA releases progress report on fracking study

WASHINGTON (AP) The Environmental Protection Agency has released a progress report on its research into potential impacts of natural gas hydraulic fracturing and drilling on drinking water.

The update released Friday doesn't come to any conclusions and the final report won't be released until 2014.

The EPA says information on fracking chemicals has been collected from nine companies and 24,925 wells. Computer analysis is also being done on well construction.

The EPA says it is working with scientists, the industry, and environmental groups to examine any possible impacts. Sampling at five locations in Colorado, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, and Texas has been completed, and lab studies are being done on drilling wastewater.

The industry and many states say the process is safe when done properly, but critics dispute that.

Online: http://www.epa.gov/hfstudy/

METAL PLANT FIRE

Fire damages metal plant in western Pa.

MOUNT PLEASANT, Pa. (AP) Fire officials say a blaze has damaged a metal plant in western Pennsylvania, but that workers weren't there at the time and no injuries are being reported.

A spokesman for Westmoreland County Emergency Management says the fire at EHC Industries Inc. in Mount Pleasant was fueled by chemicals and propane tanks.

Firefighters and hazardous materials crews responded to the building around 4 p.m. Friday and it was already consumed by heavy fire. After hours of battling the blaze, officials say firefighters were in the "mopping up" phase by 7:30 p.m.

Bud Miller, the owner, says he could not estimate the damage from the fire. But he says he plans to rebuild.

SOUTHERN BELTWAY

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

Turnpike extension to resume in western Pa.

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) A planned 13-mile extension of the Pennsylvania Turnpike in the southwestern corner of the state is back on the front burner.

Turnpike commission Chairman William Lieberman said Friday that work is resuming on the final design for the next leg of the so-called Southern Beltway. It will link U.S. Route 22 in eastern Washington County to Interstate 79 at the Washington-Allegheny County line.

Turnpike officials say the $632.5 million project has been stalled for lack of funding for several years, but that work is now proceeding.

Construction is scheduled to start in 2014 and it's scheduled to open around 2020.

Lieberman says the expressway will be an economic boon for the region, creating more than 20,000 full- and part-time jobs and injecting nearly $2.7 billion into the economy.

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Insight: In fracking culture war, celebs, billionaires and banjos
Consumer Electronics Net

12/24/2012

Insight: In fracking culture war, celebs, billionaires and banjos

US-FRACKING-CULTUREWARS:Insight: In fracking culture war, celebs, billionaires and banjos

By Joshua Schneyer and Edward McAllister

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(Reporting By Joshua Schneyer and Edward McAllister in New York; Additional reporting by Zorianna Kit in Los Angeles; Editing by Jeffrey Benkoe)

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Latest Pennsylvania business | ABC 6 WJBF-TV
WJBF-TV - Online

12/24/2012

By: |

Associated Press

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

PENNSYLVANIA JOBS

Pa. reports largest drop in jobless rate since '83

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) Pennsylvania is reporting the biggest monthly drop in joblessness in nearly 30 years, although a separate survey of employers in November showed only a slight increase in payrolls.

The state Department of Labor and Industry said Friday the unemployment rate dropped to 7.8 percent from 8.1 percent, the largest drop since 1983. It was the second monthly drop after a six-month run-up.

The national unemployment rate is 7.7 percent.

A survey of Pennsylvania employers found payrolls inched up by 1,900, hovering around 5.75 million nonfarm jobs.

A separate survey of Pennsylvania households found that the number of unemployed dropped by 16,000. Employment rose by 22,000 and the number of people working or seeking work grew by 6,000.

Pennsylvania's jobless rate hit a recessionary peak of 8.7 percent in 2010.

EPA-FRACKING STUDY

EPA releases progress report on fracking study

WASHINGTON (AP) The Environmental Protection Agency has released a progress report on its research into potential impacts of natural gas hydraulic fracturing and drilling on drinking water.

The update released Friday doesn't come to any conclusions and the final report won't be released until 2014.

The EPA says information on fracking chemicals has been collected from nine companies and 24,925 wells. Computer analysis is also being done on well construction.

The EPA says it is working with scientists, the industry, and environmental groups to examine any possible impacts. Sampling at five locations in Colorado, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, and Texas has been completed, and lab studies are being done on drilling wastewater.

The industry and many states say the process is safe when done properly, but critics dispute that.

Online: http://www.epa.gov/hfstudy/

METAL PLANT FIRE

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

RPT-INSIGHT-In fracking culture war, celebs, billionaires and banjos
Reuters - Online

12/24/2012

(Repeats for additional readers with no changes to headline or text)

* 'Fracking' overtakes 'Climate Change' in Google searches

* Actor Matt Damon brings fracking to Hollywood

* Pro and anti-drilling camps trade barbs for the cameras

By Joshua Schneyer and Edward McAllister

NEW YORK, Dec 24 (Reuters) - Not so long ago, fracking was a technical term little known beyond the energy industry. Now it's coming to Hollywood, as the fierce battle between environmentalists and oil firms is played out in several forthcoming films.

Hydraulic fracturing, the controversial drilling technique also known as fracking, has lifted U.S. energy output dramatically, despite warnings from critics who fear it pollutes water deep underground.

Any shift in public opinion could impact policy - and huge sums in energy spending - since drilling regulations are under review by the Obama administration and local officials around the country. The high stakes involve a range of issues from U.S. energy independence, to protection of drinking water.

Both sides are using movies to try to win the debate, though actor Matt Damon says viewers should not assume the movie he stars in, "Promised Land," is "a rabid anti-fracking polemic."

In the film, Damon plays a gas company landman - an agent who buys or leases land - intent on drilling beneath a town where some residents are concerned about the perils of fracking. As the landman gets to know the townspeople, he suffers a crisis of conscience.

In an interview in Los Angeles, Damon said he worries that viewers will wrongly assume the film is one-sided and not see it. He declined to offer his personal view on fracking. "That's not the point. The point is that (the film) should start a conversation."

The Northern Irish director Phelim McAleer's documentary, "FrackNation," is an unabashedly pro-drilling mantra set to air next month on AXS TV, the cable network controlled by Dallas Mavericks owner and media mogul Mark Cuban.

McAleer views fracking as "the best thing ever," a potential savior for the U.S. economy, unless the forces he likes to call "Big Enviro" succeed in derailing it.

On the other side of the argument, HBO, the cable pay channel, could air a sequel to "Gasland," a scathing 2010 documentary from director Josh Fox, as early as next year.

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In fracking culture war, celebs, billionaires and banjos [Financial Mirror (Cyprus)] Equities.com

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

Insight: In fracking culture war, celebs, billionaires and banjos Hollywood Industry

12/24/2012

Insight: In fracking culture war, celebs, billionaires and banjos

US-FRACKING-CULTUREWARS:Insight: In fracking culture war, celebs, billionaires and banjos

By Joshua Schneyer and Edward McAllister

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In an interview in Los Angeles, Damon said he worries that viewers will wrongly assume the film is one-sided and not see it. He declined to offer his personal view on fracking. "That's not the point. The point is that (the film) should start a conversation."

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Related Keywords:US , FRACKING , CULTUREWARS

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Hollywood joins fracking war
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Serafin Enriquez, Flickr.com

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Mon, 24 Dec 2012 9:38 AM

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Among their other concerns are fracking-related earthquakes and growing dependence on fossil fuels.

It is a hot topic in South Africa, too, where plans for fracking in the ecologically sensitive Karoo have faced staunch opposition from the public and from environmental groups.

Global energy company Shell is one of five companies seeking exploration licences in the Karoo, which is thought to hold the fifth-largest shale gas reserves in the world.

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By: |

Associated Press

Published: December 24, 2012 Updated: December 24, 2012 - 7:29 AM

PENNSYLVANIA LOTTERY-PRIVATIZATION

AP: Anti-gambling lawmaker voices lottery concerns

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) A key anti-gambling state legislator is cautioning Gov. Tom Corbett against accepting a bid from a British firm to manage the $3.5 billion Pennsylvania Lottery without addressing lawmakers' concerns.

Bucks County Rep. Paul Clymer wrote to Corbett on Thursday. The letter was obtained by The Associated Press.

Until now, Republicans have been largely quiet about Corbett's exploration of hiring Camelot Global Services as a private lottery manager.

Clymer says he's concerned Camelot will usher in a gambling expansion that could further hurt families. Clymer also says such a gambling expansion require lawmakers' approval.

Administration officials say they have the authority to expand lottery gambling, and Corbett says he'll only hire Camelot if he believes the company can bring in more lottery profit than the state employees who currently run it.

SCHOOL SHOOTING-SCHOLARSHIPS

Newtown siblings offered Pa. college scholarships

CHESTER, Pa. (AP) A college in suburban Philadelphia is offering four full scholarships to siblings and dependents of the Connecticut school shooting victims.

Widener University announced Friday that three scholarships are being funded by alumnus Dan Borislow, a telecommunications executive.

Widener President James Harris III said Borislow's generosity prompted the university to sponsor a fourth scholarship.

The grants are being made available to siblings of the 20 first-graders gunned down at Sandy Hook Elementary last week. Dependents of six adult victims are also eligible.

The scholarships will be available for up to 20 years, or until all four are awarded.

The applicants must first be accepted to the university in Chester, Pa. The funds will cover tuition and room and board for four years.

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PENNSYLVANIA JOBS

Pa. reports largest drop in jobless rate since '83

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) Pennsylvania is reporting the biggest monthly drop in joblessness in nearly 30 years, although a separate survey of employers in November showed only a slight increase in payrolls.

The state Department of Labor and Industry said Friday the unemployment rate dropped to 7.8 percent from 8.1 percent, the largest drop since 1983. It was the second monthly drop after a six-month run-up.

The national unemployment rate is 7.7 percent.

A survey of Pennsylvania employers found payrolls inched up by 1,900, hovering around 5.75 million nonfarm jobs.

A separate survey of Pennsylvania households found that the number of unemployed dropped by 16,000. Employment rose by 22,000 and the number of people working or seeking work grew by 6,000.

Pennsylvania's jobless rate hit a recessionary peak of 8.7 percent in 2010.

EPA-FRACKING STUDY

EPA releases progress report on fracking study

WASHINGTON (AP) The Environmental Protection Agency has released a progress report on its research into potential impacts of natural gas hydraulic fracturing and drilling on drinking water.

The update released Friday doesn't come to any conclusions and the final report won't be released until 2014.

The EPA says information on fracking chemicals has been collected from nine companies and 24,925 wells. Computer analysis is also being done on well construction.

The EPA says it is working with scientists, the industry, and environmental groups to examine any possible impacts. Sampling at five locations in Colorado, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, and Texas has been completed, and lab studies are being done on drilling wastewater.

The industry and many states say the process is safe when done properly, but critics dispute that.

Online: http://www.epa.gov/hfstudy/

METAL PLANT FIRE

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Oceania - Digital Media News and Technology

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Related Keywords:US , FRACKING , CULTUREWARS

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EPA fracking study picks 3 Wise sites
Individual.com

12/24/2012

EPA fracking study picks 3 Wise sites

Jim Fuquay

Dec 22, 2012 (Fort Worth Star-Telegram - McClatchy-Tribune Information Services via COMTEX) --

Sites in Wise County will be among case studies by the Environmental Protection Agency of the impact of hydraulic fracturing on drinking water supplies, the agency said Friday.

The agency began its research last year sparked by concerns that fracturing, or fracking, can contaminate drinking water. It's expected to complete it in 2014.

"The EPA has designed the scope of the research around five stages of the hydraulic fracturing water cycle," the 278-page progress report says. The five areas being studied are large water withdrawals; spills of hydraulic fracturing fluids; injection wells and the fracturing process; spills of flowback and produced water; and the inadequate treatment of wastewater.

The Wise County locations were chosen because of reported complaints over drinking water quality changes. The areas are clustered in three distinct locations -- two near Decatur and one near Alvord.

Reaction to the report, released at midday, was slow to develop.

Bruce Baizel, director of the Oil & Gas Accountability Project for Earthworks, which has been critical of the industry, said the report "represents a step toward EPA's first real scientific inquiry into the safety of fracking -- a step nearly 10 years in the making."

But Sen. Jim Inhofe, R-Okla., a frequent EPA critic, said in a statement that the progress report "is more proof that the administration is not in search of truth, but rather for justification to regulate hydraulic fracturing and cripple the oil and gas industry."

EPA said that as of September, it had data from 24,925 wells fractured between September 2009 and October 2010. It will also use data from FracFocus, an intergovernmental disclosure site of fracturing fluids supported by energy companies.

Also Friday, the EPA finalized rules to reduce air pollution from industrial boilers and incinerators while offering industry more flexibility and lower costs to comply with the new standards. Most of the nation's 1.5 million boilers are too small or emit too little pollution to warrant controls, the administration said.

The changes will require new pollution controls within three years at about 2,300 of the most polluting boilers, including those at refineries and chemical plants. An extra year can be granted to install new pollution controls.

The EPA said it cut the cost of compliance by about $1.5 billion.

Jay Timmons, CEO of the National Association of Manufacturers, said the regulations were "far from being realistic." He

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accused the EPA of pushing "costly and crippling" rules "when our economy is on the brink."

This report includes material from The Associated Press.

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

Latest Pennsylvania business
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PENNSYLVANIA LOTTERY-PRIVATIZATION

AP: Anti-gambling lawmaker voices lottery concerns

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) A key anti-gambling state legislator is cautioning Gov. Tom Corbett against accepting a bid from a British firm to manage the $3.5 billion Pennsylvania Lottery without addressing lawmakers' concerns.

Bucks County Rep. Paul Clymer wrote to Corbett on Thursday. The letter was obtained by The Associated Press.

Until now, Republicans have been largely quiet about Corbett's exploration of hiring Camelot Global Services as a private lottery manager.

Clymer says he's concerned Camelot will usher in a gambling expansion that could further hurt families. Clymer also says such a gambling expansion require lawmakers' approval.

Administration officials say they have the authority to expand lottery gambling, and Corbett says he'll only hire Camelot if he believes the company can bring in more lottery profit than the state employees who currently run it.

SCHOOL SHOOTING-SCHOLARSHIPS

Newtown siblings offered Pa. college scholarships

CHESTER, Pa. (AP) A college in suburban Philadelphia is offering four full scholarships to siblings and dependents of the Connecticut school shooting victims.

Widener University announced Friday that three scholarships are being funded by alumnus Dan Borislow, a telecommunications executive.

Widener President James Harris III said Borislow's generosity prompted the university to sponsor a fourth scholarship.

The grants are being made available to siblings of the 20 first-graders gunned down at Sandy Hook Elementary last week. Dependents of six adult victims are also eligible.

The scholarships will be available for up to 20 years, or until all four are awarded.

The applicants must first be accepted to the university in Chester, Pa. The funds will cover tuition and room and board for four years.

PENNSYLVANIA JOBS

Pa. reports largest drop in jobless rate since '83

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) Pennsylvania is reporting the biggest monthly drop in joblessness in nearly 30 years, although a separate survey of employers in November showed only a slight increase in payrolls.

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The state Department of Labor and Industry said Friday the unemployment rate dropped to 7.8 percent from 8.1 percent, the largest drop since 1983. It was the second monthly drop after a six-month run-up.

The national unemployment rate is 7.7 percent.

A survey of Pennsylvania employers found payrolls inched up by 1,900, hovering around 5.75 million nonfarm jobs.

A separate survey of Pennsylvania households found that the number of unemployed dropped by 16,000. Employment rose by 22,000 and the number of people working or seeking work grew by 6,000.

Pennsylvania's jobless rate hit a recessionary peak of 8.7 percent in 2010.

EPA-FRACKING STUDY

EPA releases progress report on fracking study

WASHINGTON (AP) The Environmental Protection Agency has released a progress report on its research into potential impacts of natural gas hydraulic fracturing and drilling on drinking water.

The update released Friday doesn't come to any conclusions and the final report won't be released until 2014.

The EPA says information on fracking chemicals has been collected from nine companies and 24,925 wells. Computer analysis is also being done on well construction.

The EPA says it is working with scientists, the industry, and environmental groups to examine any possible impacts. Sampling at five locations in Colorado, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, and Texas has been completed, and lab studies are being done on drilling wastewater.

The industry and many states say the process is safe when done properly, but critics dispute that.

Online: http://www.epa.gov/hfstudy/

METAL PLANT FIRE

Fire damages metal plant in western Pa.

MOUNT PLEASANT, Pa. (AP) Fire officials say a blaze has damaged a metal plant in western Pennsylvania, but that workers weren't there at the time and no injuries are being reported.

A spokesman for Westmoreland County Emergency Management says the fire at EHC Industries Inc. in Mount Pleasant was fueled by chemicals and propane tanks.

Firefighters and hazardous materials crews responded to the building around 4 p.m. Friday and it was already consumed by heavy fire. After hours of battling the blaze, officials say firefighters were in the "mopping up" phase by 7:30 p.m.

Bud Miller, the owner, says he could not estimate the damage from the fire. But he says he plans to rebuild.

SOUTHERN BELTWAY

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Turnpike extension to resume in western Pa.

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) A planned 13-mile extension of the Pennsylvania Turnpike in the southwestern corner of the state is back on the front burner.

Turnpike commission Chairman William Lieberman said Friday that work is resuming on the final design for the next leg of the so-called Southern Beltway. It will link U.S. Route 22 in eastern Washington County to Interstate 79 at the Washington-Allegheny County line.

Turnpike officials say the $632.5 million project has been stalled for lack of funding for several years, but that work is now proceeding.

Construction is scheduled to start in 2014 and it's scheduled to open around 2020.

Lieberman says the expressway will be an economic boon for the region, creating more than 20,000 full- and part-time jobs and injecting nearly $2.7 billion into the economy.

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WTBX-FM - Online

12/24/2012

Sunday, December 23, 2012 11:02 p.m. CST

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INSIGHT - In fracking culture war, celebs, billionaires and banjos - Yahoo! India Finance in.finance.yahoo.com

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Reuters

_ 7 hours ago

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

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In fracking culture war, celebs, billionaires and banjos
KPNews.com

12/24/2012

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EPA offers hints on fracking's future; 'Water cycle' will be big part of final report
Utility Products Magazine - Online

12/24/2012

The Obama administration has pulled back the curtain on its long-awaited study of the possible correlation between water pollution and fracking, but the full results and definitive findings of its far-reaching report won't be released until 2014.

The review, the most sweeping federal survey to date, likely will have major implications for the country's natural gas and oil boom spurred by hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, which has transformed the U.S. fuel market and is reshaping the global energy landscape.

The Environmental Protection Agency offered a "progress report" on its broad, multifaceted study, which includes data gathered from hundreds of natural gas and oil wells across the U.S.

The agency in 2010 was charged by Congress to examine fracking, which uses water, sand and chemical mixtures to crack underground rock and release previously inaccessible reserves of natural gas and other fuels.

The boom from fracking has transformed local economies in Pennsylvania, North Dakota and elsewhere, and it has put the nation on track to become energy-independent in a stunningly short period of time.

"More jobs are being created. Imports are down. And more revenue is being sent to government. Continuation of this trend is vital to America's economic recovery and long-term prosperity," said Rayola Dougher, senior economic adviser with the American Petroleum Institute. "However, the right government policies will be important to facilitating this."

The ongoing EPA study is set to become the cornerstone of future federal fracking policies, yet many congressional Republicans and oil and gas industry leaders remain leery of the science behind the government's probe.

The White House and several governors have come under increasing pressure from environmental groups to ban or greatly limit the practice, and some fear the EPA report will become justification for those steps.

In its progress report, the EPA explains how it is examining five major areas of the fracking "water cycle." They are: the impact of large water withdrawals, necessary to perform fracking; the possible impacts of fracking fluid surface spills and how they would affect drinking-water resources; the implications of "injection and fracturing process" on drinking-water resources; how "flowback" - wastewater generated by fracking - could affect water supplies; and the possible effects of inadequate treatment of fracking wastewater.

The EPA is conducting case studies at well sites in Colorado, North Dakota, Pennsylvania and Texas. So far, the agency has collected samples from 70 domestic water wells, 15 monitoring wells and 13 surface water sources. It also is looking at "information on chemicals and practices" from a number of oil and gas companies, and it is evaluating "well construction and fracturing records" provided by operators for 333 oil and gas wells across the U.S.

The study, the agency said, will undergo rigorous and independent peer review before being completed.

In the meantime, oil and gas industry leaders must confront the swelling tide of negative publicity surrounding fracking. The practice has drawn the attention of many musicians, movie stars and other celebrities who want to see it banned entirely.

Fracking is "toxic and stupid" and "it has to be stopped," actress and activist Mariel Hemingway said at an October rally in

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Colorado, which is engaged in a heated debate over the future of fracking in the state. "All of us are a community that needs to make a stand."

It also is the subject of a new film, "Promised Land," which depicts the process in a negative light.

That attention, combined with the potential that the EPA will indict fracking in its final report, requires a strong response from the oil and gas sector.

"I think we've got a major education project to do," Tim Wigley, president of the Western Energy Alliance, told the Washington Times.

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Yahoo! News

12/24/2012

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

EPA offers hints on fracking's future; 'Water cycle' will be big part of final report
Electric Light and Power

12/24/2012

The Obama administration has pulled back the curtain on its long-awaited study of the possible correlation between water pollution and fracking, but the full results and definitive findings of its far-reaching report won't be released until 2014.

The review, the most sweeping federal survey to date, likely will have major implications for the country's natural gas and oil boom spurred by hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, which has transformed the U.S. fuel market and is reshaping the global energy landscape.

The Environmental Protection Agency offered a "progress report" on its broad, multifaceted study, which includes data gathered from hundreds of natural gas and oil wells across the U.S.

The agency in 2010 was charged by Congress to examine fracking, which uses water, sand and chemical mixtures to crack underground rock and release previously inaccessible reserves of natural gas and other fuels.

The boom from fracking has transformed local economies in Pennsylvania, North Dakota and elsewhere, and it has put the nation on track to become energy-independent in a stunningly short period of time.

"More jobs are being created. Imports are down. And more revenue is being sent to government. Continuation of this trend is vital to America's economic recovery and long-term prosperity," said Rayola Dougher, senior economic adviser with the American Petroleum Institute. "However, the right government policies will be important to facilitating this."

The ongoing EPA study is set to become the cornerstone of future federal fracking policies, yet many congressional Republicans and oil and gas industry leaders remain leery of the science behind the government's probe.

The White House and several governors have come under increasing pressure from environmental groups to ban or greatly limit the practice, and some fear the EPA report will become justification for those steps.

In its progress report, the EPA explains how it is examining five major areas of the fracking "water cycle." They are: the impact of large water withdrawals, necessary to perform fracking; the possible impacts of fracking fluid surface spills and how they would affect drinking-water resources; the implications of "injection and fracturing process" on drinking-water resources; how "flowback" - wastewater generated by fracking - could affect water supplies; and the possible effects of inadequate treatment of fracking wastewater.

The EPA is conducting case studies at well sites in Colorado, North Dakota, Pennsylvania and Texas. So far, the agency has collected samples from 70 domestic water wells, 15 monitoring wells and 13 surface water sources. It also is looking at "information on chemicals and practices" from a number of oil and gas companies, and it is evaluating "well construction and fracturing records" provided by operators for 333 oil and gas wells across the U.S.

The study, the agency said, will undergo rigorous and independent peer review before being completed.

In the meantime, oil and gas industry leaders must confront the swelling tide of negative publicity surrounding fracking. The practice has drawn the attention of many musicians, movie stars and other celebrities who want to see it banned entirely.

Fracking is "toxic and stupid" and "it has to be stopped," actress and activist Mariel Hemingway said at an October rally in

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Colorado, which is engaged in a heated debate over the future of fracking in the state. "All of us are a community that needs to make a stand."

It also is the subject of a new film, "Promised Land," which depicts the process in a negative light.

That attention, combined with the potential that the EPA will indict fracking in its final report, requires a strong response from the oil and gas sector.

"I think we've got a major education project to do," Tim Wigley, president of the Western Energy Alliance, told the Washington Times.

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WHTC-AM - Online

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Insight: In fracking culture war, celebs, billionaires and banjos - Page 2 - kwch.com KSCW-TV - Online

12/24/2012

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By Joshua Schneyer and Edward McAllister

Reuters

11:06 p.m. CST , December 23, 2012

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News

Technology

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24 December, 2012

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Thomson Reuters - UK - Online

12/24/2012

1 of 2. A fracking operation is seen outside Williston, North Dakota, October 19, 2012.

NEW YORK | Mon Dec 24, 2012 7:31am GMT

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Reuters | 3 hours ago

By Joshua Schneyer and Edward McAllister

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12/24/2012

Written on December 23, 2012 by Editor - Entertainment News

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News

Insight: In fracking culture war, celebs, billionaires and banjos

Sunday, December 23, 2012 11:02 p.m. CST

By Joshua Schneyer and Edward McAllister

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INSIGHT - In fracking culture war, celebs, billionaires and banjos

Source :

Last Updated: Mon, Dec 24, 2012 11:00 hrs

By Joshua Schneyer and Edward McAllister

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Both sides are using movies to try to win the debate, though actor Matt Damon says viewers should not assume the movie he stars in, "Promised Land," is "a rabid anti-fracking polemic."

In the film, Damon plays a gas company landman - an agent who buys or leases land - intent on drilling beneath a town where some residents are concerned about the perils of fracking. As the landman gets to know the townspeople, he suffers a crisis of conscience.

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Insight: In fracking culture war, celebs, billionaires and banjos
wtaq.com

12/24/2012

Sunday, December 23, 2012 11:02 p.m. CST

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12/24/2012

Insight: In fracking culture war, celebs, billionaires and banjos

Actor Matt Damon (Alberto E. Rodriguez, Getty Images)

By Joshua Schneyer and Edward McAllister

Reuters

10:06 p.m. MST , December 23, 2012

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NEW YORK | Mon Dec 24, 2012 10:33am IST

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WLMI-FM - Online

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Members of the the Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance of the European Parliament hold leaflets with the slogan "Stop Fracking" as they demonstrate against shale gas during a voting session at the European Parliament in Strasbourg, November 21, 2012.

Credit: Reuters/Vincent Kessler

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EID released its own pro-drilling film, "Truthland," this year, dubbing it "the factual alternative to Gasland." LOSING PR BATTLE? In some ways, the film blitz may be behind the times. Fracking has already come to dominate U.S. drilling over the last half-decade: Onshore rigs doing so-called unconventional drilling account for nearly two-thirds of the total.

Tucker and industry officials are regulars at conferences, in newspaper op-ed articles, and on TV to defend drilling.

On the environmentalist side, Fox travels widely to lead anti-fracking rallies, sometimes rousing crowds by playing a banjo, which is also featured in the Gasland soundtrack. He has enlisted help from artists including Yoko Ono and Sean Lennon.

"The lesson of 'Gasland' is that public perception is a very big part of the equation," said Jonathan Wood, a political risk analyst at London-based Control Risks, whose clients include oil companies.

In a report this month, Wood wrote that the industry has "largely failed to appreciate social and political risks, and has repeatedly been caught off guard by the sophistication, speed and influence of anti-fracking activists." Hydraulic fracturing entails pumping water laced with chemicals and sand at high pressure into shale rock formations to break them up and unleash hydrocarbons.

The minerals are trapped thousands of feet below water tables, but critics worry that fracking fluids or hydrocarbons can still leak into water tables from wells, or above ground. Among their other concerns: fracking-related earthquakes, and growing dependence on fossil fuels.

The United States now rivals Russia as the world's top gas producer, in large part due to fracking, and has stemmed a long decline in oil output, which stands at an 18-year high near 7 million barrels a day.

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

So far, the Obama administration has cautiously endorsed the new drilling, but the U.S. Department of Interior is working on new fracking rules on public lands starting next year.

Some drillers have faced fracking-related fines for water contamination due to spilled fracking fluid. Last year, after sampling water in rural Pavillion, Wyoming, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) presented the first-ever U.S. government finding of a potential link between fracking and water contamination.

More broadly, however, the EPA condones fracking on safety grounds. But unlike the growing consensus among climate scientists linking global warming and industrial activity, there is no consensus that fracking poses a danger. Unconventional drilling has surged only over the last half decade.

The EPA will release an in-depth study on fracking's potential impacts on water supplies in 2014.

Tough economic times can widen support for drilling. A national Gallup poll this year showed that more Americans favored prioritizing economic growth over the protection of the environment (49 percent versus 41 percent).

That's a reversal from 2007, when 55 percent favored environmental protection.

Cuban is betting the hot potato issue will draw viewers to "FrackNation" on his cable channel.

"Op-Ed-umentaries like this are supposed to make people think about the topic, which is always a good thing," he said.

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Latest Pennsylvania business
Associated Press (AP) - Harrisburg Bureau

12/24/2012

PENNSYLVANIA LOTTERY-PRIVATIZATION

AP: Anti-gambling lawmaker voices lottery concerns

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) _ A key anti-gambling state legislator is cautioning Gov. Tom Corbett against accepting a bid from a British firm to manage the $3.5 billion Pennsylvania Lottery without addressing lawmakers' concerns.

Bucks County Rep. Paul Clymer wrote to Corbett on Thursday. The letter was obtained by The Associated Press.

Until now, Republicans have been largely quiet about Corbett's exploration of hiring Camelot Global Services as a private lottery manager.

Clymer says he's concerned Camelot will usher in a gambling expansion that could further hurt families. Clymer also says such a gambling expansion require lawmakers' approval.

Administration officials say they have the authority to expand lottery gambling, and Corbett says he'll only hire Camelot if he believes the company can bring in more lottery profit than the state employees who currently run it.

SCHOOL SHOOTING-SCHOLARSHIPS

Newtown siblings offered Pa. college scholarships

CHESTER, Pa. (AP) _ A college in suburban Philadelphia is offering four full scholarships to siblings and dependents of the Connecticut school shooting victims.

Widener University announced Friday that three scholarships are being funded by alumnus Dan Borislow, a telecommunications executive.

Widener President James Harris III said Borislow's generosity prompted the university to sponsor a fourth scholarship.

The grants are being made available to siblings of the 20 first-graders gunned down at Sandy Hook Elementary last week. Dependents of six adult victims are also eligible.

The scholarships will be available for up to 20 years, or until all four are awarded.

The applicants must first be accepted to the university in Chester, Pa. The funds will cover tuition and room and board for four years.

PENNSYLVANIA JOBS

Pa. reports largest drop in jobless rate since `83

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) _ Pennsylvania is reporting the biggest monthly drop in joblessness in nearly 30 years, although a separate survey of employers in November showed only a slight increase in payrolls.

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The state Department of Labor and Industry said Friday the unemployment rate dropped to 7.8 percent from 8.1 percent, the largest drop since 1983. It was the second monthly drop after a six-month run-up.

The national unemployment rate is 7.7 percent.

A survey of Pennsylvania employers found payrolls inched up by 1,900, hovering around 5.75 million nonfarm jobs.

A separate survey of Pennsylvania households found that the number of unemployed dropped by 16,000. Employment rose by 22,000 and the number of people working or seeking work grew by 6,000.

Pennsylvania's jobless rate hit a recessionary peak of 8.7 percent in 2010.

EPA-FRACKING STUDY

EPA releases progress report on fracking study

WASHINGTON (AP) _ The Environmental Protection Agency has released a progress report on its research into potential impacts of natural gas hydraulic fracturing and drilling on drinking water.

The update released Friday doesn't come to any conclusions and the final report won't be released until 2014.

The EPA says information on fracking chemicals has been collected from nine companies and 24,925 wells. Computer analysis is also being done on well construction.

The EPA says it is working with scientists, the industry, and environmental groups to examine any possible impacts. Sampling at five locations in Colorado, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, and Texas has been completed, and lab studies are being done on drilling wastewater.

The industry and many states say the process is safe when done properly, but critics dispute that.

Online: http://www.epa.gov/hfstudy/

METAL PLANT FIRE

Fire damages metal plant in western Pa.

MOUNT PLEASANT, Pa. (AP) _ Fire officials say a blaze has damaged a metal plant in western Pennsylvania, but that workers weren't there at the time and no injuries are being reported.

A spokesman for Westmoreland County Emergency Management says the fire at EHC Industries Inc. in Mount Pleasant was fueled by chemicals and propane tanks.

Firefighters and hazardous materials crews responded to the building around 4 p.m. Friday and it was already consumed by heavy fire. After hours of battling the blaze, officials say firefighters were in the "mopping up" phase by 7:30 p.m.

Bud Miller, the owner, says he could not estimate the damage from the fire. But he says he plans to rebuild.

SOUTHERN BELTWAY

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Turnpike extension to resume in western Pa.

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) _ A planned 13-mile extension of the Pennsylvania Turnpike in the southwestern corner of the state is back on the front burner.

Turnpike commission Chairman William Lieberman said Friday that work is resuming on the final design for the next leg of the so-called Southern Beltway. It will link U.S. Route 22 in eastern Washington County to Interstate 79 at the Washington-Allegheny County line.

Turnpike officials say the $632.5 million project has been stalled for lack of funding for several years, but that work is now proceeding.

Construction is scheduled to start in 2014 and it's scheduled to open around 2020.

Lieberman says the expressway will be an economic boon for the region, creating more than 20,000 full- and part-time jobs and injecting nearly $2.7 billion into the economy.

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EPA offers hints on fracking's future
Washington Times - Online

12/23/2012

'Water cycle' will be big part of final report

By Ben Wolfgang

-

The Washington Times

Sunday, December 23, 2012

The Obama administration has pulled back the curtain on its long-awaited study of the possible correlation between water pollution and fracking, but the full results and definitive findings of its far-reaching report won't be released until 2014.

The review, the most sweeping federal survey to date, likely will have major implications for the country's natural gas and oil boom spurred by hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, which has transformed the U.S. fuel market and is reshaping the global energy landscape.

The Environmental Protection Agency offered a "progress report" on its broad, multifaceted study, which includes data gathered from hundreds of natural gas and oil wells across the U.S.

The agency in 2010 was charged by Congress to examine fracking, which uses water, sand and chemical mixtures to crack underground rock and release previously inaccessible reserves of natural gas and other fuels.

The boom from fracking has transformed local economies in Pennsylvania, North Dakota and elsewhere, and it has put the nation on track to become energy-independent in a stunningly short period of time.

"More jobs are being created. Imports are down. And more revenue is being sent to government. Continuation of this trend is vital to America's economic recovery and long-term prosperity," said Rayola Dougher , senior economic adviser with the American Petroleum Institute. "However, the right government policies will be important to facilitating this."

The ongoing EPA study is set to become the cornerstone of future federal fracking policies, yet many congressional Republicans and oil and gas industry leaders remain leery of the science behind the government's probe.

The White House and several governors have come under increasing pressure from environmental groups to ban or greatly limit the practice, and some fear the EPA report will become justification for those steps.

In its progress report, the EPA explains how it is examining five major areas of the fracking "water cycle." They are: the impact of large water withdrawals, necessary to perform fracking; the possible impacts of fracking fluid surface spills and how they would affect drinking-water resources; the implications of "injection and fracturing process" on drinking-water resources; how "flowback" - wastewater generated by fracking - could affect water supplies; and the possible effects of inadequate treatment of fracking wastewater.

The EPA is conducting case studies at well sites in Colorado, North Dakota, Pennsylvania and Texas. So far, the agency has collected samples from 70 domestic water wells, 15 monitoring wells and 13 surface water sources. It also is looking

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at "information on chemicals and practices" from a number of oil and gas companies, and it is evaluating "well construction and fracturing records" provided by operators for 333 oil and gas wells across the U.S.

The study, the agency said, will undergo rigorous and independent peer review before being completed.

In the meantime, oil and gas industry leaders must confront the swelling tide of negative publicity surrounding fracking. The practice has drawn the attention of many musicians, movie stars and other celebrities who want to see it banned entirely.

Fracking is "toxic and stupid" and "it has to be stopped," actress and activist Mariel Hemingway, said at an October rally in Colorado, which is engaged in a heated debate over the future of fracking in the state "All of us are a community that needs to make a stand."

It also is the subject of a new film, "Promised Land," which depicts the process in a highly negative light.

That attention, combined with the potential that the EPA will indict fracking in its final report, require a strong response from the oil and gas sector.

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EPA Still Investigating If Fracking Can Contaminate Drinking Water
WCPN-FM - Online

12/23/2012

As natural gas drilling continues to expand across Ohio and the rest of the country, many still have questions about whether the process threatens drinking water resources. Over the past year, the US Environmental Protection Agency has launched an extensive research project to answer that question. Ideastream's Michelle Kanu has an update on their progress.

The EPA says they're conducting 18 research projects into hydraulic fracturing— where water, sand and chemicals are blasted into the earth to release natural gas. And they're looking at several aspects of fracking, from gathering water for the process to treating the wastewater that comes back up to the surface after drilling is complete.

While EPA officials have declined to comment further beyond their published update, environmental advocacy groups are watching their progress closely.

Dusty Horwitt is a senior counsel with Environmental Working Group, a research organization based in DC. He says the EPA's research project needs to be broad because it is difficult to prove the exact source of water contamination.

Horwitt: "There are so many different points in the process that could potentially cause pollution, geology and hydrology is going to be different in different parts of the country. We don't know in many cases exactly what chemicals the industry is using in its fracking process so that adds a level of difficulty to the research."

Horwitt says there are few scientific studies of hydraulic fracturing that involve actual testing of water quality before and after drilling, so that should be a key part of the EPA's efforts.

The EPA plans to release a final draft of the study for public comment in late 2014.

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EDITORIAL: Are water supplies at risk? [The Fresno Bee] Equities.com

12/23/2012

The Fresno Bee McClatchy-Tribune Information Services

Dec. 23--For decades in California, energy companies have used a method called hydraulic fracturing, or "fracking," to extract deposits of oil and natural gas from deep underground. The process involves injecting pressurized water, sand and chemical additives into a wellbore to fracture the rock formations to get at the fossil fuels.

The oil industry lauds hydraulic fracturing for unlocking enormous amounts of domestic gas and oil. In a recent letter to The Bee, Catherine Reheis-Boyd, president of the Western States Petroleum Association, said that this process "has been employed in California for 60 years and there has never been evidence that it has caused harm to water supplies or the environment."

Reheis-Boyd's unflinching confidence reminds us of chemical industry claims that DDT was safe in 1950 or oil industry claims in the 1990s that MTBE, a gasoline additive, was safe. After all, if something has been used widely for many years, it can't be harmful, right?

The reality is that we just don't know. The process has been little studied in California and nationwide by independent scientists. Only now is the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency launching a study of how fracking could affect drinking water. The EPA has released a progress report on that study, and hopes to have some firmer results next year, assuming the oil industry allows it to study a site before and after fracking.

The stakes couldn't be higher in California, the nation's third-largest producer of oil. We are home home to the largest oil shale formation in the continental United States -- the Monterey Shale. Oil companies are preparing to expand exploratory wells into that deep deposit, which runs from Los Angeles to Northern California and is thought to contain 15 billion barrels of oil.

Under pressure from environmentalists, Gov. Jerry Brown's administration last week released preliminary draft regulations on fracking. To its credit, the California Division of Oil, Gas and Geothermal Resources wants energy companies, for the first time, to disclose where they are engaged in hydraulic fracturing. Regulators say the rules contain some of the strongest provisions in the nation, including a requirement that oil companies test the integrity of their wells to guard against leaks of fracturing chemicals and report those test results to the state.

That's a step forward, but the draft regulations would still allow energy companies to withhold what kind of chemicals they are using, if they deem their formulas to be "trade secrets." Industry officials say disclosure of proprietary formulas would stifle competition and prevent extraction of an important natural resource.

Sorry, but as valuable as fossil fuels are, California groundwater is a much more treasured resource, and it needs to be protected. California must insist on full disclosure on fracking chemicals. If regulators think they lack the authority to order such disclosure, then the Legislature will need to pass legislation to make it the law of the land.

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South Dakota tries to clear path for oil, gas
Sioux Falls Business Journal - Online

12/23/2012

Payoff may be trickle compared to other states, but legislators want to revise rules

A look at oil production, in barrels, for selected years in South Dakota and North Dakota:

Sources: S.D. Dept. of Environment and Natural Resources , N.D. Industrial Comm.

The South Dakota Legislature s oil and gas summer study committee recommended eight oil and gas bills for consideration this session:

HB1001: Require mineral developers to give landowners seven days notice before coming onto their property: http://tinyurl.com/bq56tuo>

HB1002: Create trust accounts for mineral interest holders who can t be located: http://tinyurl.com/chjfosg>

HB1003: Create a mediation program for developers and landowners involved in surface depredation disputes: http://tinyurl.com/bt87b5s>

HB1004: Allow a judge to award triple damages in surface depredation cases in which either party refuses to negotiate in good faith: http://tinyurl.com/cptbms4>

HB1005: Require drillers that hydraulically fracture oil or gas wells to disclose in the FracFocus database the chemicals used: http://tinyurl.com/cwl8aqm>

HB1006: Revise several provisions regarding the termination of mineral interests: http://tinyurl.com/c2xrwxq>

SB1: Raise the well plugging and performance bond from $5,000 to $50,000 (and raise blanket from $20,000 to $100,000): http://tinyurl.com/ctf7gos>

SB2: Appropriate $300,000 from the petroleum release compensation fund for a program to assist landowners resolve surface depredation disputes: http://tinyurl.com/d2a8fe5>

The Environmental Protection Agency on Friday released a progress report for a multiyear study of the effects of hydraulic fracturing on drinking water supplies. Congress requested the study in 2009.

The agency drew no conclusions about contamination risks. Instead, it outlined the progress it has made on 18 research projects across the country, including an investigation of the risks to drinking water in Dunn County, N.D., in the case of an oil well blowout.

A draft of the final report is not expected until late 2014. Read the progress report and other materials from the study at http://epa.gov/hfstudy>.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources has proposed rules to address oil and gas well reclamation and the disclosure of chemicals used in hydraulically fractured wells.

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Read the rules: http://tinyurl.com/SD-oil-gas-rules>.

Get involved: The South Dakota Board of Minerals and Environment will meet Jan. 17 to consider the rules. The meeting begins at 10 a.m. (Central Time) at the Matthew Environmental Education and Training Center, 523 E. Capitol Ave., in Pierre.

To join the meeting via teleconference: Call DENR by 3 p.m. (Central Time) on Jan. 16 and ask for the conference number and password: 605-773-3886.

Written comments: Such comments will be considered until Jan. 9. Send comments to: South Dakota DENR Minerals and Mining Program, 523 E. Capitol Ave., Pierre, SD 57501.

North Dakota might have won the natural resources lottery when it comes to oil and gas drilling, but officials in South Dakota are beginning to lay the groundwork for their state s own industry renaissance.

The Legislature soon will consider several measures to update the legal framework for oil and natural gas exploration, the latest step in a years-long push to expand South Dakota s fledgling drilling industry.

So far, eight of the 11 bills recommended for introduction when the session begins in Pierre in January address oil and gas issues, including legislation to increase bonding and reclamation requirements, bolster landowner protections and clarify decades-old mineral leasing laws.

Our laws are so antiquated, done back in the 1950s and 60s by well-meaning legislators who thought it would stand test of time, said Sen. Tom Nelson, R-Lead. But they weren t drilling 20,000 feet underground back then.

Securing protection for landowners

Nelson is vice chairman of the summer study group that crafted the legislation. The goal, he said, is to remove obstacles encountered by drilling companies that want to explore in the statewhile at the same time strengthening landowner protections.

HB1003, for example, would establish a new mediation program for disputes that arise because of damage to the land. HB1004 would authorize triple damages in such disputes if either party refuses to conduct good-faith negotiations.

David Ganje, a Rapid City lawyer who said he counts both energy companies and landowners as clients, praised the Legislature for moving to update its drilling statutes.

This is good for our economy, he said. The clearer the road map is, the clearer the rules of the road are for development, the more likely it is that developers will come. ... (Current laws) don t account for some of the modern technologies in mineral development, and they don t account for major changes in natural resources law that have happened (since they were passed).

For instance, bonding requirements are too low not only because they haven t been adjusted for inflation, but also because reclamation has become much more expensive, he said.

The reason that much of our legislation has been around for such a long time, without anybody challenging it, is that we as a state haven t had that much natural resource development, Ganje said. So, consequently, there hasn t been much attention paid to these statues. It hasn t had much of an effect on our economy, on our politics. ... but it s increasing.

Taking a cue from North Dakota

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The proposed legislation is patterned after regulations in North Dakota, where oil and gas production is soaring with the advent of new techniques such as directional drilling and hydraulic fracturing. Oil production there has risen more than 350 percent from a decade ago, according to data from the North Dakota Industrial Commission.

By comparison, South Dakota s production is minuscule. Last year, energy companies produced 1.6 million barrels of oil in South Dakota, almost all of it in Harding County. That s about what North Dakota does in four days.

The boom in North Dakota has centered on the Bakken Shale, a massive underground formation that does not extend into South Dakota. But another promising shale that has been successfully tapped in North Dakota the Three Forks does extend into South Dakota. And state officials hope that by making well information more accessible and reforming decades-old mineral laws, they can entice energy companies to explore in South Dakota.

Members of the summer study committee traveled to North Dakota to discuss drilling development with lawmakers and regulators. They also visited ranches and well sites in Harding County, and various government and industry groups have held public meetings in the Black Hills towns that would be most affected by any boom. They discussed not only the promise of natural resource development but also its flip side, as seen in North Dakota: a severe housing crunch, crime, overburdened roads and other social problems.

State DENR updates its rules

Meanwhile, and in tandem with the proposed legislation, the South Dakota Department of Environment and Natural Resources is moving to amend a few of its own oil and gas rules.

One rule would establish best practices for interim reclamation in the time between when a well is completed and when it s plugged which can be years.

It s meant to encourage good housekeeping at the well site, said Bob Townsend, administrator of the state s minerals and mining program.

Another rule would require drillers who use hydraulic fracturing, or fracking a controversial process that involves pumping large amounts of water, sand and chemicals downwell to tap tight oil and gas deposits to disclose the chemicals it uses on FracFocus.org, a nationwide database of fracking chemicals. Presently, disclosure to FracFocus is voluntary. The database has no entries from South Dakota.

(The rule was proposed) to allay some of the concerns that have been raised over hydraulic fracturing nationally, Townsend said.

Those concerns mostly involve the possibility of drinking water contamination by fracking chemicals. The Environmental Protection Agency on Friday released a status report for a multiyear review of fracking and drinking water contamination. The agency drew no conclusions about contamination risks. The final report won t be out for two years.

Scant concern about contamination

South Dakota officials say there is little worry of contaminating West River aquifers with frack fluids. Because the target shales are much deeper than domestic water supplies and protected by thick layers of intervening rock formations, they say, migration of the chemicals in to the water supply is unlikely.

It s unclear how many wells in South Dakota are fracked each year. Until now, the state s oil and gas division did not keep track because fracking was considered a routine well-completion technique. Anecdotally, however, fracking appears to

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have been used most often to finish a small number gas wells in Harding County, Townsend said.

We re talking very small volumes of frack fluids, he said 10,000 to 20,000 gallons per well, perhaps, compared with a well in Colorado where a frack job might involve more than 3 million gallons.

The DENR fracking disclosure rule duplicates the wording of HB1005, one of the bills introduced by the study committee. It s not clear whether the policy will be accomplished in rule or law, Nelson said.

Nelson did say, however, that the disclosure requirement does not mean a drilling company would be forced to reveal its proprietary fluids, a sticking point with other states that have moved to address fracking.

In the relatively small world of South Dakota drillers, Continental Resources is a big player, having extracted about one-quarter of all the oil produced in the state since record keeping began in the 1950s, according to DENR data.

Blu Hulsey, Continental s director of governmental affairs, said a company representative will be in Pierre on Jan. 17 when the Board of Minerals and Environment meets to consider the rule.

We re reviewing the rules right now and plan to make comments, Hulsey said. He declined to elaborate other than to say the rules are in line with what other states have proposed.

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Does Fracking Contaminate Drinking Water?
NationofChange

12/23/2012

Results of the study, which Congress requested EPA to complete, are expected to be released in a draft for public and peer review in 2014.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) today provided an update on its ongoing national study currently underway to better understand any potential impacts of hydraulic fracturing on drinking water resources.

According to an EPA press release:

Results of the study, which Congress requested EPA to complete, are expected to be released in a draft for public and peer review in 2014. The update provided today outlines work currently underway, including the status of research projects that will inform the final study. It is important to note that while this progress report outlines the framework for the final study, it does not draw conclusions about the potential impacts of hydraulic fracturing on drinking water resources, which will be made in the final study.

As the administration and EPA has made clear, natural gas has a central role to play in our energy future, and this important domestic fuel source has extensive economic, energy security and environmental benefits. The study EPA is currently undertaking is part of EPA's focus to ensure that the Administration continues to work to expand production of this important domestic resource safely and responsibly.

Among the information released today are updates on 18 research projects and details on the agency's research approach as well as next steps for these ongoing projects and analyses. Today's update follows the public release, in November 2011, of the agency's final study plan, which underwent scientific peer review and public comment.

EPA has engaged stakeholders, including industry, to ensure that the study reflects current practices in hydraulic fracturing. EPA continues to request data and information from the public and stakeholders and has put out a formal request for information which can be accessed through the federal register.

EPA also expects to release a draft report of results from the study in late 2014. The study has been designated a Highly Influential ScientificAssessment, meaning it will receive the highest level of peer review in accordance with EPA's peer review handbook before it is finalized. The 2014 draft report will synthesize the results from the ongoing projects together with the scientific literature to answer the study's main research questions.

EPA's Science Advisory Board (SAB) is forming a panel of independent experts which will review and provide their individual input on the ongoing study to EPA. The SAB will provide an opportunity for the public to offer comments for consideration by the individual panel members.

The EPA is offering a webinar at two different times to brief the public on the progress report and technical roundtables:

Jan. 3, 2013. 2 p.m. EST: EPA's Study of the Potential Impacts of Hydraulic Fracturing on Drinking Water Resources: Progress Report

Jan. 4, 2013. Noon EST: EPA's Study of the Potential Impacts of Hydraulic Fracturing on Drinking Water Resources: Progress Report

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EPA study seen as soft on fracking
Peakoil

12/23/2012

The Environmental Protection Agency released a progress report Friday that reiterated its support for increasing natural gas development in the United States.

"As the administration and EPA has made clear, natural gas has a central role to play in our energy future," the agency said in a press release. "The administration continues to work to expand production of this important domestic resource safely and responsibly."

EPA outlined several steps it's taking to assess the impacts fracking — short for hydraulic fracturing — has on the nation' s water supply, as directed by Congress in 2009.

Steps include:

– Analyzing existing data from natural gas companies on chemicals and practices used

– Modeling how discharging waste might impact the water

– Lab testing on water discharge

– Testing fracking chemicals for toxicity

– Testing groundwater in five regions near drilling activity

As expected, the study contained no new data or conclusions. The final results are not expected until late 2014.

Some see the lack of data or negative comments in Friday's progress report as a positive for the industry.

"It signals that the Obama administration has no real appetite for additional federal regulations until 2014 at the earliest," said Nitzan Goldberger, a natural gas analyst at Eurasia Group, a political risk consultancy. "That's good news for the oil and gas guys."

The Obama administration has tightened some rules around fracking, but for the most part has left regulation up to the states.

Fracking involves injecting massive amounts of water, sand and some chemicals deep underground in a bid to crack shale rock and ease the flow of oil and natural gas.

The process has unleashed an energy boom in the United States, creating thousands of jobs, driving down the price of oil and natural gas and cutting energy imports to levels not seen in decades.

But it's also raised serious concerns over its effects on the environment, including air pollution from trucks and wells, its links to earthquakes and fears that it is contaminating drinking water.

For environmentalists, the negatives seem to outweigh the positives.

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Fracking was once seen by some environmentalists as a technology that, given the proper regulations, could be done safely and provide a fuel that emits far fewer greenhouse gases than coal. Natural gas was seen as a good alternative to coal, at least until renewables like wind and solar were ready for prime time.

But declining costs for renewables, more instances of water contamination, uncertainly over the heat-trappng nature of natural gas that escapes from wells unburned, and a fear that cheap gas is crowding out wind and solar have led many to change their minds.

Several environmental groups are calling for an immediate ban on fracking, while others favor a gradual phase out combined with greater federal regulation.

On the other side are many analysts and economists that believe this technology can give the United States a significant economic and geopolitical advantage.

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The new robber barons
Westernfront America Westernfront America

12/23/2012

The Obama Gang is stealing our taxes, energy resources, revenues, jobs and economy.

Even amid demands that Congress raise taxes on "millionaires," to fund bloated government agencies and programs, President Obama and his Administration steadfastly refuse to permit leasing and drilling for our nation's bountiful oil and gas resources – which would raise tens of billions in annual revenues.

Indeed, these new robber barons are not content only with taxing job creators and saddling our grandchildren with trillion-dollar IOUs. They are using hard-earned tax money to finance renewable energy schemes that primarily reward crony capitalist campaign contributors, wreck wildlife habitats and kill birds – even as they locking up centuries' of oil, gas, coal and uranium that could produce an economic revival, create millions of jobs, and generate the aforementioned billions of dollars in federal, state and local royalty and tax revenues.

An oil and natural gas boom is underway in the United States, born of horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracturing, or "fracking." It has created tens of thousands of well-paying jobs directly, and hundreds of thousands more in hundreds of businesses that supply and support the industry and its workers.

In North Dakota, the unemployment rate is 2.4 percent, in large part because of a huge increase in natural gas and crude oil production from deep shale rocks that yielded nothing prior to fracking. The new technology is also driving job growth, higher incomes, and increased tax revenues for hard-pressed state and local governments in Louisiana, Pennsylvania, Texas and other states.

Meanwhile, 350 miles north of Edmonton, Alberta, other innovators are producing billions of barrels from oil sands that stretch across an area the size of Utah. Shallow deposits are accessible via surface mining, while deeper lodes are tapped using in situ drilling and steam injection. As work is completed in an area, the land is restored to woodlands, grasslands, lakes and marshes, and the process moves on.

As with fracking, the oil sands create tens of thousands of high-paying jobs and generate billions in revenue, benefitting people from Fort McMurray, Calgary and Vancouver to Ottawa and Halifax, and throughout the United States. Construction of the Keystone XL Pipeline would multiply these benefits.

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

And yet, despite ample evidence that responsible development of these enormous energy resources could power a national economic, manufacturing and employment renaissance, the Obama Administration's environmental ideologies and political debts to radical green groups could delay or stymie progress.

The new robber barons in the Executive Branch and Congress are not content only with taxing job creators and saddling our children and great grandchildren with trillion-dollar IOUs. They are using hard-earned tax money to finance wind, solar, biofuel and other schemes that primarily reward crony capitalist campaign contributors. They're also locking up centuries' of oil, gas, coal and uranium that could generate an economic revival, millions of jobs, and many billions in federal, state and local royalty and tax revenues.

Some say the way these robber barons use, abuse and ignore laws to advance this agenda reminds them of the infamous James Gang, which plundered banks and trains until Northfield, Minnesota citizens ended their lawless ways. Others say a better example is the Chicago-based Al Capone mob.

Still others point to the Capitol Hill "fiscal cliff" negotiations, as providing clues as to what lies ahead. President Obama says he favors a "balanced" approach to avoid fiscal calamity, but insists on raising taxes on high-income citizens – and will not discuss reining in entitlement expenditures that are lead life preservers on taxpayers and our economy. His Treasury Secretary tells us, "There are no options."

The President's unique concept of "balance" also defines his "all of the above" energy program. Like Humpty Dumpty, his words mean just what he chooses them to mean – as in all of the above-ground projects, but none of the below-ground resources. Perhaps the real question is, who is to be master … of our lives, natural resources, nation and pursuit of happiness?

Thus the Administration banned oil development on 1.6 million more acres of federal lands in the West and millions more on the Outer Continental Shelf, while delaying leasing and drilling in still more areas – on top of vast acreage and resources that Congress placed off limits through legislation. The ruling czars and robber barons also imposed ethanol-in-gasoline requirements that turn 40% of the nation's corn crop into fuel, converting an area the size of Missouri from growing food crops to producing fuel that we could get by drilling, and driving up the cost of countless food products.

Their wind and solar programs waste billions of tax dollars on expensive, unreliable electricity projects that blanket habitats and steal our wildlife heritage, in violation of clear environmental laws.

Meanwhile, EPA issued still more hugely expensive rules that effectively ban the use of coal in electricity generation – sending coal's contribution from 45% a few years ago to 35% today, and killing thousands of mining and utility jobs. Its latest rules demand that the transportation sector slash its soot emissions another 20% – ostensibly to reduce asthma,

other illnesses and "thousands" of premature deaths.

In reality, the only health or environmental benefits exist in EPA computer models, press releases and cover-ups of illegal experiments on humans, whose response to being subjected to "dangerous" levels of soot actually disproved EPA's claim that tougher standards are needed. EPA has also ignored the significant health risks caused by its regulations, especially for now unemployed older workers.

In the midst of all this, at the just concluded United Nations climate change negotiations in Doha, Qatar, Obama Administration representatives entertained brazen proposals to require developed countries to compensate less developed countries for "climate change damages" – under a wealth redistribution scheme that could potentially cost United States taxpayers hundreds of billions of dollars. Also in the works are EPA rules, laws and treaty agreements to force the US to curb fossil fuel use and CO2 emissions.

Inconvenient facts about these decisions were simply ignored – or treated much the same way as Steven Spielberg handled his powerful and entertaining Lincoln movie. It was released after the 2012 elections, many believe, so that minority and other voters would learn too late that it was our sixteenth president and other Republicans who championed the end of slavery – and northern and southern Democrats who fought to prevent passage of the Thirteenth Amendment, outlawing the heinous practice.

The robber barons say whatever is expedient – and then pursue policies that undermine the overall public welfare, while postponing many costly and politically explosive actions until after elections.

They also ignore and undermine the recent International Energy Agency forecast that, by 2020, the USA could be producing more oil than Saudi Arabia, currently the largest oil producer on the globe, thanks to advances in seismic, fracking, deepwater drilling and other technologies. A March 2012 Citi Global Problems and Solutions report painted a clear picture of the benefits that domestic energy development could bring – if government "public servants" and environmental "public interest" groups would permit it.

Cumulatively, the new production, reduced consumption and numerous activities associated with these technologies "could increase real GDP by an additional 2% to 3%, creating from 2.7 million to as many as 3.6 million net new jobs by 2020," the Citi report stated. They could also shrink America's "current account deficit" by 2.4% of GDP (a 60% reduction in the current budget deficit) and cause the dollar to appreciate in real terms by +1.6 to +5.4% – all by 2020.

In the next few decades, Citi concluded, the energy sector "could drive an extraordinary and timely revitalization and reindustrialization of the U.S. economy, creating jobs and bringing prosperity to millions of Americans, just as the national economy struggles to recover from the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression." It would also "improve

national energy security and reverse perennial current account deficits" for decades to come.

However, as the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research has made clear, these enormous benefits "are at risk if new restrictions are imposed on the industry, from delays in approval of liquid natural gas exports, to opposition to expanding ports for coal and gas export, to opposition to pipelines and refineries, and to the threat of redundant federal regulations on the technology of hydraulic fracturing." Worse, foregoing these enormous benefits would bring little or no improvement to the environment or human welfare.

Abundant, reliable, affordable energy is the backbone of the US and global economy. Perhaps one day renewable energy will become a viable alternative to the hydrocarbons that sustain jobs and energize virtually everything we make, ship, eat and do. Until then, America and the world need to promote regulatory sanity and increased production of our enormous base of coal, oil and natural gas resources.

Paul Driessen is senior policy advisor for the Committee For A Constructive Tomorrow (www.CFACT.org) and author of Eco-Imperialism: Green power – Black death.

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

EDITORIAL: Are water supplies at risk?
Individual.com

12/23/2012

EDITORIAL: Are water supplies at risk?

Dec 23, 2012 (The Fresno Bee - McClatchy-Tribune Information Services via COMTEX) --

For decades in California, energy companies have used a method called hydraulic fracturing, or "fracking," to extract deposits of oil and natural gas from deep underground. The process involves injecting pressurized water, sand and chemical additives into a wellbore to fracture the rock formations to get at the fossil fuels.

The oil industry lauds hydraulic fracturing for unlocking enormous amounts of domestic gas and oil. In a recent letter to The Bee, Catherine Reheis-Boyd, president of the Western States Petroleum Association, said that this process "has been employed in California for 60 years and there has never been evidence that it has caused harm to water supplies or the environment."

Reheis-Boyd's unflinching confidence reminds us of chemical industry claims that DDT was safe in 1950 or oil industry claims in the 1990s that MTBE, a gasoline additive, was safe. After all, if something has been used widely for many years, it can't be harmful, right?

The reality is that we just don't know. The process has been little studied in California and nationwide by independent scientists. Only now is the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency launching a study of how fracking could affect drinking water. The EPA has released a progress report on that study, and hopes to have some firmer results next year, assuming the oil industry allows it to study a site before and after fracking.

The stakes couldn't be higher in California, the nation's third-largest producer of oil. We are home home to the largest oil shale formation in the continental United States -- the Monterey Shale. Oil companies are preparing to expand exploratory wells into that deep deposit, which runs from Los Angeles to Northern California and is thought to contain 15 billion barrels of oil.

Under pressure from environmentalists, Gov. Jerry Brown's administration last week released preliminary draft regulations on fracking. To its credit, the California Division of Oil, Gas and Geothermal Resources wants energy companies, for the first time, to disclose where they are engaged in hydraulic fracturing. Regulators say the rules contain some of the strongest provisions in the nation, including a requirement that oil companies test the integrity of their wells to guard against leaks of fracturing chemicals and report those test results to the state.

That's a step forward, but the draft regulations would still allow energy companies to withhold what kind of chemicals they are using, if they deem their formulas to be "trade secrets." Industry officials say disclosure of proprietary formulas would stifle competition and prevent extraction of an important natural resource.

Sorry, but as valuable as fossil fuels are, California groundwater is a much more treasured resource, and it needs to be protected. California must insist on full disclosure on fracking chemicals. If regulators think they lack the authority to order such disclosure, then the Legislature will need to pass legislation to make it the law of the land.

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EPA releases progress report on fracking study
Steubenville Herald-Star - Online

12/23/2012

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Environmental Protection Agency has released a progress report on its research into potential impacts of natural gas hydraulic fracturing and drilling on drinking water.

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The EPA says information on fracking chemicals has been collected from nine companies and 24,925 wells. Computer analysis is also being done on well construction.

The EPA says it is working with scientists, the industry, and environmental groups to examine any possible impacts. Sampling at five locations in Colorado, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, and Texas has been completed, and lab studies are being done on drilling wastewater.

The industry and many states say the process is safe when done properly, but critics dispute that.

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Energy experts say drilling can be made cleaner
Foster's Daily Democrat - Online

12/23/2012

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Energy experts say drilling can be made cleaner

Sunday, December 23, 2012

PITTSBURGH (AP) - In the Colorado mountains, a spike in air pollution has been linked to a boom in oil and gas drilling. About 800 miles away on the plains of north Texas, there's a drilling boom, too, but some air pollution levels have declined. Opponents of drilling point to Colorado and say it's dangerous. Companies point to Texas and say drilling is safe.

The answer appears to be that drilling can be safe or it can be dangerous. Industry practices, enforcement, geography and even snow cover can minimize or magnify air pollution problems.

"It's like a vehicle. Some cars drip oil," said Russell Schnell, deputy director of the federal Earth System Research Laboratory in Boulder, Colo. "You have wells that are absolutely tight. And you have other places where a valve gives out, and you have huge leaks."

The good news, nearly all sides agree, is that the technology exists to control methane gas leaks and other air pollution associated with drilling. The bad news is that the industry is booming so rapidly that some companies and some regulators can't seem to get ahead of the problems, which could ultimately cost billions of dollars to remedy.

The worries about what drilling does to the air are both global and local, with scientists concerned about the effects on climate change as well as the possible health consequences from breathing smog, soot and other pollutants.

Hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, has made it possible to tap into deep reserves of oil and gas but has also raised concerns about pollution. The industry and many federal and state officials say the practice is safe when done properly, but environmental groups and some scientists say there hasn't been enough research.

Some environmentalists say if leaks and pollution can be minimized, the boom has benefits, since gas burns much cleaner than coal, emitting half the carbon dioxide.

Al Gore told The Associated Press that it's "not irresponsible" to look at gas as a short-term substitute for coal-fired electricity. But Gore added that the main component of gas, methane, is a more potent heat-trapping greenhouse gas than CO2. That means that if large quantities leak, the advantage over coal disappears, the former vice president said.

In Colorado, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration estimated that 4 percent of methane was leaking from wells, far more than previously estimated, and that people who live near production areas may be exposed to worrisome levels of benzene and other toxic compounds present in oil and gas.

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Across the industry, the technology for stopping leaks can be as simple as fixing seals and gaskets, or it can involve hundreds of millions of dollars of new construction.

"I think it's totally fixable," Schnell said. "At least the bigger companies, they are really on top of this."

Gore added that when companies capture leaking methane, they end up with more to sell. "So there's an economic incentive to capture it and stop the leaking," he said.

Another major source of worry is the industry's practice of burning off, or flaring, natural gas that comes out of the ground as a byproduct of oil drilling. Over the past five years, the U.S. has increased the amount of flared and wasted gas more than any other nation, though Russia still burns off far more than any other country.

In some places, energy companies haven't invested in the infrastructure needed to capture and process the gas because the oil is more valuable.

In the Bakken Shale oil fields of North Dakota, for example, about 30 percent of the natural gas is flared off because there aren't enough pipelines yet to carry it away. The amount of gas wasted in the state is estimated at up to $100 million a year. And officials in North Dakota said last month that the situation there might not be completely solved until the end of the decade.

NOAA scientists also say natural gas production has contributed to unusual wintertime smog in the West, particularly in regions surrounded by mountains, and especially in snowy areas.

Ozone, the main component in smog, typically forms when sunlight "cooks" a low-lying stew of chemicals such as benzene and engine exhaust. Normally, the process doesn't happen in cold weather.

But NOAA researchers found that when there's heavy snowfall, the sun passes through the stew, then bounces off the snow and heats it again on the way back up. In some cases, smog in remote areas has spiked to levels higher than those in New York or Los Angeles.

In open regions that are more exposed to wind, the ozone vanishes, sometimes within hours or a day. But in Utah basins it can linger for weeks, Schnell said.

Evidence that gas drilling air pollution can be managed - but that more work may still need to be done - comes from north Texas, where the shale gas boom began around Fort Worth about 10 years ago.

Mike Honeycutt, director of toxicology for the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, said that in the early years of the boom, people complained about excessive pollution. Regulators started using special hand-held cameras to pinpoint pollution sources and found some sites with high levels of benzene and other volatile organic compounds.

"It was a maintenance issue. They were in such a hurry, and they were drilling so fast, they were not being as vigilant as they should have been," Honeycutt said. "So we passed new rules that made them take more notice."

Honeycutt said the cameras, which cost about $100,000 each, have revolutionized the way inspectors monitor sites. Texas has also installed nine 24-hour air monitoring stations in the drilling region around Fort Worth, and more are on the way. Now, he said, even as drilling has increased, summer ozone levels have declined.

In 1997 there were only a few hundred shale gas wells in the Fort Worth area and the summertime ozone level hit 104 parts per billion, far above the national standard then of 85. By 2012 the number of wells had risen to about 16,000, but preliminary results show the ozone level was 87 last summer.

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There's still room for improvement, Honeycutt said, but the trend is clear, since the monitoring is no longer showing worrisome levels of benzene, either.

The Environmental Protection Agency isn't completely convinced. This year the federal agency cited Wise County in north Texas, a heavy gas drilling area, for violating ozone standards. Industry groups and the state have argued that the finding was based on faulty science.

So far, NOAA scientists say they haven't found signs that gas or oil drilling is contributing to a global rise in methane.

"Not the mid-latitudes where the drilling is being done, which is interesting," said James Butler, head of global monitoring for NOAA.

The EPA has passed new rules on oil and gas emissions that are scheduled to go into effect in 2015, and in 2012 it reached legal settlements that will require companies to spend more than $14 million on pollution controls in Utah and Wyoming. Colorado, Texas and other states have passed more stringent rules, too.

Carlton Carroll, a spokesman for the American Petroleum Institute, a lobbying group for the oil and gas industry, pointed out that many companies started developing the equipment to limit methane and other pollution before the EPA rule.

"API is not opposed to controls on oil and gas operations so long as the controls are cost-effective, allow sufficient lead time and can be implemented safely," Carroll said in an email, adding that the industry has requested some technical clarifications to the rule and is working with EPA on those.

Prasad Kasibhatla, a professor of environmental chemistry at Duke University, said that controlling gas drilling pollution is "technically solvable" but requires close attention by regulators.

"One has to demonstrate that it is solved, and monitored," he said.

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EPA releases progress report on fracking study
Tyler Star News - Online

12/23/2012

/ News / WV News /

EPA releases progress report on fracking study

December 22, 2012

Associated Press

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Tyler Star News

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S.D. tries to clear path for oil, gas
Sioux Falls Business Journal - Online

12/23/2012

Payoff may be trickle of other states, but legislators want to revise rules

A look at oil production, in barrels, for selected years in South Dakota and North Dakota:

Sources: S.D. Dept. of Environment and Natural Resources , N.D. Industrial Comm.

The South Dakota Legislature s oil and gas summer study committee recommended eight oil and gas bills for consideration this session:

HB1001: Require mineral developers to give landowners seven days notice before coming onto their property: http://tinyurl.com/bq56tuo>

HB1002: Create trust accounts for mineral interest holders who can t be located: http://tinyurl.com/chjfosg>

HB1003: Create a mediation program for developers and landowners involved in surface depredation disputes: http://tinyurl.com/bt87b5s>

HB1004: Allow a judge to award triple damages in surface depredation cases in which either party refuses to negotiate in good faith: http://tinyurl.com/cptbms4>

HB1005: Require drillers that hydraulically fracture oil or gas wells to disclose in the FracFocus database the chemicals used: http://tinyurl.com/cwl8aqm>

HB1006: Revise several provisions regarding the termination of mineral interests: http://tinyurl.com/c2xrwxq>

SB1: Raise the well plugging and performance bond from $5,000 to $50,000 (and raise blanket from $20,000 to $100,000): http://tinyurl.com/ctf7gos>

SB2: Appropriate $300,000 from the petroleum release compensation fund for a program to assist landowners resolve surface depredation disputes: http://tinyurl.com/d2a8fe5>

The Environmental Protection Agency on Friday released a progress report for a multiyear study of the effects of hydraulic fracturing on drinking water supplies. Congress requested the study in 2009.

The agency drew no conclusions about contamination risks. Instead, it outlined the progress it has made on 18 research projects across the country, including an investigation of the risks to drinking water in Dunn County, N.D., in the case of an oil well blowout.

A draft of the final report is not expected until late 2014. Read the progress report and other materials from the study at http://epa.gov/hfstudy>.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources has proposed rules to address oil and gas well reclamation and the disclosure of chemicals used in hydraulically fractured wells.

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Read the rules: http://tinyurl.com/SD-oil-gas-rules>.

Get involved: The South Dakota Board of Minerals and Environment will meet Jan. 17 to consider the rules. The meeting begins at 10 a.m. (Central Time) at the Matthew Environmental Education and Training Center, 523 E. Capitol Ave., in Pierre.

To join the meeting via teleconference: Call DENR by 3 p.m. (Central Time) on Jan. 16 and ask for the conference number and password: 605-773-3886.

Written comments: Such comments will be considered until Jan. 9. Send comments to: South Dakota DENR Minerals and Mining Program, 523 E. Capitol Ave., Pierre, SD 57501.

Read the regulations and the EPA report

North Dakota might have won the natural resources lottery when it comes to oil and gas drilling, but officials in South Dakota are beginning to lay the groundwork for their state s own industry renaissance.

The Legislature soon will consider several measures to update the legal framework for oil and natural gas exploration, the latest step in a years-long push to expand South Dakota s fledgling drilling industry.

So far, eight of the 11 bills recommended for introduction when the session begins in Pierre in January address oil and gas issues, including legislation to increase bonding and reclamation requirements, bolster landowner protections and clarify decades-old mineral leasing laws.

Our laws are so antiquated, done back in the 1950s and 60s by well-meaning legislators who thought it would stand test of time, said Sen. Tom Nelson, R-Lead. But they weren t drilling 20,000 feet underground back then.

Securing protection for landowners

Nelson is vice chairman of the summer study group that crafted the legislation. The goal, he said, is to remove obstacles encountered by drilling companies that want to explore in the statewhile at the same time strengthening landowner protections.

HB1003, for example, would establish a new mediation program for disputes that arise because of damage to the land. HB1004 would authorize triple damages in such disputes if either party refuses to conduct good-faith negotiations.

David Ganje, a Rapid City lawyer who said he counts both energy companies and landowners as clients, praised the Legislature for moving to update its drilling statutes.

This is good for our economy, he said. The clearer the road map is, the clearer the rules of the road are for development, the more likely it is that developers will come. ... (Current laws) don t account for some of the modern technologies in mineral development, and they don t account for major changes in natural resources law that have happened (since they were passed).

For instance, bonding requirements are too low not only because they haven t been adjusted for inflation, but also because reclamation has become much more expensive, he said.

The reason that much of our legislation has been around for such a long time, without anybody challenging it, is that we as a state haven t had that much natural resource development, Ganje said. So, consequently, there hasn t been much attention paid to these statues. It hasn t had much of an effect on our economy, on our politics. ... but it s increasing.

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Taking a cue from North Dakota

The proposed legislation is patterned after regulations in North Dakota, where oil and gas production is soaring with the advent of new techniques such as directional drilling and hydraulic fracturing. Oil production there has risen more than 350 percent from a decade ago, according to data from the North Dakota Industrial Commission.

By comparison, South Dakota s production is minuscule. Last year, energy companies produced 1.6 million barrels of oil in South Dakota, almost all of it in Harding County. That s about what North Dakota does in four days.

The boom in North Dakota has centered on the Bakken Shale, a massive underground formation that does not extend into South Dakota. But another promising shale that has been successfully tapped in North Dakota the Three Forks does extend into South Dakota. And state officials hope that by making well information more accessible and reforming decades-old mineral laws, they can entice energy companies to explore in South Dakota.

Members of the summer study committee traveled to North Dakota to discuss drilling development with lawmakers and regulators. They also visited ranches and well sites in Harding County, and various government and industry groups have held public meetings in the Black Hills towns that would be most affected by any boom. They discussed not only the promise of natural resource development but also its flip side, as seen in North Dakota: a severe housing crunch, crime, overburdened roads and other social problems.

State DENR updates its rules

Meanwhile, and in tandem with the proposed legislation, the South Dakota Department of Environment and Natural Resources is moving to amend a few of its own oil and gas rules.

One rule would establish best practices for interim reclamation in the time between when a well is completed and when it s plugged which can be years.

It s meant to encourage good housekeeping at the well site, said Bob Townsend, administrator of the state s minerals and mining program.

Another rule would require drillers who use hydraulic fracturing, or fracking a controversial process that involves pumping large amounts of water, sand and chemicals downwell to tap tight oil and gas deposits to disclose the chemicals it uses on FracFocus.org, a nationwide database of fracking chemicals. Presently, disclosure to FracFocus is voluntary. The database has no entries from South Dakota.

(The rule was proposed) to allay some of the concerns that have been raised over hydraulic fracturing nationally, Townsend said.

Those concerns mostly involve the possibility of drinking water contamination by fracking chemicals. The Environmental Protection Agency on Friday released a status report for a multiyear review of fracking and drinking water contamination. The agency drew no conclusions about contamination risks. The final report won t be out for two years.

Scant concern about contamination

South Dakota officials say there is little worry of contaminating West River aquifers with frack fluids. Because the target shales are much deeper than domestic water supplies and protected by thick layers of intervening rock formations, they say, migration of the chemicals in to the water supply is unlikely.

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It s unclear how many wells in South Dakota are fracked each year. Until now, the state s oil and gas division did not keep track because fracking was considered a routine well-completion technique. Anecdotally, however, fracking appears to have been used most often to finish a small number gas wells in Harding County, Townsend said.

We re talking very small volumes of frack fluids, he said 10,000 to 20,000 gallons per well, perhaps, compared with a well in Colorado where a frack job might involve more than 3 million gallons.

The DENR fracking disclosure rule duplicates the wording of HB1005, one of the bills introduced by the study committee. It s not clear whether the policy will be accomplished in rule or law, Nelson said.

Nelson did say, however, that the disclosure requirement does not mean a drilling company would be forced to reveal its proprietary fluids, a sticking point with other states that have moved to address fracking.

In the relatively small world of South Dakota drillers, Continental Resources is a big player, having extracted about one-quarter of all the oil produced in the state since record keeping began in the 1950s, according to DENR data.

Blu Hulsey, Continental s director of governmental affairs, said a company representative will be in Pierre on Jan. 17 when the Board of Minerals and Environment meets to consider the rule.

We re reviewing the rules right now and plan to make comments, Hulsey said. He declined to elaborate other than to say the rules are in line with what other states have proposed.

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

Editorial: California must insist on full disclosure of chemicals used in oil and gas 'fracking' Sacramento Bee - Online, The

12/23/2012

For decades in California, energy companies have used a method called hydraulic fracturing, or "fracking," to extract deposits of oil and natural gas from deep underground. The process involves injecting pressurized water, sand and chemical additives into a wellbore to fracture the rock formations to get at the fossil fuels.

The oil industry lauds hydraulic fracturing for unlocking enormous amounts of domestic gas and oil. In a recent letter to The Bee, Catherine Reheis-Boyd, president of the Western States Petroleum Association, said that this process "has been employed in California for 60 years and there has never been evidence that it has caused harm to water supplies or the environment."

Reheis-Boyd's unflinching confidence reminds us of chemical industry claims that DDT was safe in the 1950s or oil industry claims in the 1990s that MTBE, a gasoline additive, was safe. After all, if something has been used widely for many years, it can't be harmful, right?

The reality is, with fracking, we just don't know. The process has been little studied in California and nationwide by independent scientists. Only now is the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency launching a truly independent study of how fracking could affect drinking water supplies. The EPA released a progress report on that study last week, and hopes to have some firmer results next year, assuming the oil industry allows it to study a site before and after fracking.

Here in the Golden State, the stakes couldn't be higher. California is the nation's third-largest producer of oil, and is home to the largest oil shale formation in the continental United States the Monterey Shale. Oil companies are preparing to expand exploratory wells into that deep deposit, which runs from Los Angeles to Northern California and is thought to contain 15 billion barrels of oil.

Under pressure from environmentalists, the administration of Gov. Jerry Brown last week released preliminary draft regulations on fracking. To its credit, the California Division of Oil, Gas and Geothermal Resources wants energy companies, for the first time, to disclose where they are engaged in hydraulic fracturing. Regulators say the proposed rules contain some of the strongest provisions in the nation, including a requirement that oil companies test the integrity of their wells to guard against leaks of fracturing chemicals and report those test results to the state.

That's a step forward, but the draft regulations would still allow energy companies to withhold what kind of chemicals they are using, if they deem their formulas to be "trade secrets." Industry officials say disclosure of proprietary formulas would stifle competition and prevent extraction of an important natural resource.

Sorry, but as valuable as fossil fuels are, California groundwater is a much more treasured resource, and it needs to be protected. We don't allow food companies to withhold the fact they might be adding carcinogenic chemicals to their recipes. Why should we allow oil companies to do the same with fracking?

California must insist on full disclosure on fracking chemicals. If regulators think they lack the authority to order such disclosure, then the Legislature will need to pass legislation to make it the law of the land.

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

Energy experts say drilling can be made cleaner
Foster's Daily Democrat - Online

12/23/2012

Sunday, December 23, 2012

PITTSBURGH (AP) — In the Colorado mountains, a spike in air pollution has been linked to a boom in oil and gas drilling. About 800 miles away on the plains of north Texas, there's a drilling boom, too, but some air pollution levels have declined. Opponents of drilling point to Colorado and say it's dangerous. Companies point to Texas and say drilling is safe.

The answer appears to be that drilling can be safe or it can be dangerous. Industry practices, enforcement, geography and even snow cover can minimize or magnify air pollution problems.

"It's like a vehicle. Some cars drip oil," said Russell Schnell, deputy director of the federal Earth System Research Laboratory in Boulder, Colo. "You have wells that are absolutely tight. And you have other places where a valve gives out, and you have huge leaks."

The good news, nearly all sides agree, is that the technology exists to control methane gas leaks and other air pollution associated with drilling. The bad news is that the industry is booming so rapidly that some companies and some regulators can't seem to get ahead of the problems, which could ultimately cost billions of dollars to remedy.

The worries about what drilling does to the air are both global and local, with scientists concerned about the effects on climate change as well as the possible health consequences from breathing smog, soot and other pollutants.

Hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, has made it possible to tap into deep reserves of oil and gas but has also raised concerns about pollution. The industry and many federal and state officials say the practice is safe when done properly, but environmental groups and some scientists say there hasn't been enough research.

Some environmentalists say if leaks and pollution can be minimized, the boom has benefits, since gas burns much cleaner than coal, emitting half the carbon dioxide.

Al Gore told The Associated Press that it's "not irresponsible" to look at gas as a short-term substitute for coal-fired electricity. But Gore added that the main component of gas, methane, is a more potent heat-trapping greenhouse gas than CO_2. That means that if large quantities leak, the advantage over coal disappears, the former vice president said.

In Colorado, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration estimated that 4 percent of methane was leaking from wells, far more than previously estimated, and that people who live near production areas may be exposed to worrisome levels of benzene and other toxic compounds present in oil and gas.

Across the industry, the technology for stopping leaks can be as simple as fixing seals and gaskets, or it can involve hundreds of millions of dollars of new construction.

"I think it's totally fixable," Schnell said. "At least the bigger companies, they are really on top of this."

Gore added that when companies capture leaking methane, they end up with more to sell. "So there's an economic incentive to capture it and stop the leaking," he said.

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Another major source of worry is the industry's practice of burning off, or flaring, natural gas that comes out of the ground as a byproduct of oil drilling. Over the past five years, the U.S. has increased the amount of flared and wasted gas more than any other nation, though Russia still burns off far more than any other country.

In some places, energy companies haven't invested in the infrastructure needed to capture and process the gas because the oil is more valuable.

In the Bakken Shale oil fields of North Dakota, for example, about 30 percent of the natural gas is flared off because there aren't enough pipelines yet to carry it away. The amount of gas wasted in the state is estimated at up to $100 million a year. And officials in North Dakota said last month that the situation there might not be completely solved until the end of the decade.

NOAA scientists also say natural gas production has contributed to unusual wintertime smog in the West, particularly in regions surrounded by mountains, and especially in snowy areas.

Ozone, the main component in smog, typically forms when sunlight "cooks" a low-lying stew of chemicals such as benzene and engine exhaust. Normally, the process doesn't happen in cold weather.

But NOAA researchers found that when there's heavy snowfall, the sun passes through the stew, then bounces off the snow and heats it again on the way back up. In some cases, smog in remote areas has spiked to levels higher than those in New York or Los Angeles.

In open regions that are more exposed to wind, the ozone vanishes, sometimes within hours or a day. But in Utah basins it can linger for weeks, Schnell said.

Evidence that gas drilling air pollution can be managed — but that more work may still need to be done — comes from north Texas, where the shale gas boom began around Fort Worth about 10 years ago.

Mike Honeycutt, director of toxicology for the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, said that in the early years of the boom, people complained about excessive pollution. Regulators started using special hand-held cameras to pinpoint pollution sources and found some sites with high levels of benzene and other volatile organic compounds.

"It was a maintenance issue. They were in such a hurry, and they were drilling so fast, they were not being as vigilant as they should have been," Honeycutt said. "So we passed new rules that made them take more notice."

Honeycutt said the cameras, which cost about $100,000 each, have revolutionized the way inspectors monitor sites. Texas has also installed nine 24-hour air monitoring stations in the drilling region around Fort Worth, and more are on the way. Now, he said, even as drilling has increased, summer ozone levels have declined.

In 1997 there were only a few hundred shale gas wells in the Fort Worth area and the summertime ozone level hit 104 parts per billion, far above the national standard then of 85. By 2012 the number of wells had risen to about 16,000, but preliminary results show the ozone level was 87 last summer.

There's still room for improvement, Honeycutt said, but the trend is clear, since the monitoring is no longer showing worrisome levels of benzene, either.

The Environmental Protection Agency isn't completely convinced. This year the federal agency cited Wise County in north Texas, a heavy gas drilling area, for violating ozone standards. Industry groups and the state have argued that the finding was based on faulty science.

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So far, NOAA scientists say they haven't found signs that gas or oil drilling is contributing to a global rise in methane.

"Not the mid-latitudes where the drilling is being done, which is interesting," said James Butler, head of global monitoring for NOAA.

The EPA has passed new rules on oil and gas emissions that are scheduled to go into effect in 2015, and in 2012 it reached legal settlements that will require companies to spend more than $14 million on pollution controls in Utah and Wyoming. Colorado, Texas and other states have passed more stringent rules, too.

Carlton Carroll, a spokesman for the American Petroleum Institute, a lobbying group for the oil and gas industry, pointed out that many companies started developing the equipment to limit methane and other pollution before the EPA rule.

"API is not opposed to controls on oil and gas operations so long as the controls are cost-effective, allow sufficient lead time and can be implemented safely," Carroll said in an email, adding that the industry has requested some technical clarifications to the rule and is working with EPA on those.

Prasad Kasibhatla, a professor of environmental chemistry at Duke University, said that controlling gas drilling pollution is "technically solvable" but requires close attention by regulators.

"One has to demonstrate that it is solved, and monitored," he said.

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EPA releases progress report on fracking study
Wetzel Chronicle - Online

12/23/2012

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Environmental Protection Agency has released a progress report on its research into potential impacts of natural gas hydraulic fracturing and drilling on drinking water.

The update released Friday doesn't come to any conclusions and the final report won't be released until 2014.

The EPA says information on fracking chemicals has been collected from nine companies and 24,925 wells. Computer analysis is also being done on well construction.

The EPA says it is working with scientists, the industry, and environmental groups to examine any possible impacts. Sampling at five locations in Colorado, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, and Texas has been completed, and lab studies are being done on drilling wastewater.

The industry and many states say the process is safe when done properly, but critics dispute that.

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EDITORIAL: Are water supplies at risk?
Fresno Bee - Online

12/23/2012

News

For decades in California, energy companies have used a method called hydraulic fracturing, or "fracking," to extract deposits of oil and natural gas from deep underground. The process involves injecting pressurized water, sand and chemical additives into a wellbore to fracture the rock formations to get at the fossil fuels.

The oil industry lauds hydraulic fracturing for unlocking enormous amounts of domestic gas and oil. In a recent letter to The Bee, Catherine Reheis-Boyd, president of the Western States Petroleum Association, said that this process "has been employed in California for 60 years and there has never been evidence that it has caused harm to water supplies or the environment."

Reheis-Boyd's unflinching confidence reminds us of chemical industry claims that DDT was safe in 1950 or oil industry claims in the 1990s that MTBE, a gasoline additive, was safe. After all, if something has been used widely for many years, it can't be harmful, right?

The reality is that we just don't know. The process has been little studied in California and nationwide by independent scientists. Only now is the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency launching a study of how fracking could affect drinking water. The EPA has released a progress report on that study, and hopes to have some firmer results next year, assuming the oil industry allows it to study a site before and after fracking.

The stakes couldn't be higher in California, the nation's third-largest producer of oil. We are home home to the largest oil shale formation in the continental United States -- the Monterey Shale. Oil companies are preparing to expand exploratory wells into that deep deposit, which runs from Los Angeles to Northern California and is thought to contain 15 billion barrels of oil.

Under pressure from environmentalists, Gov. Jerry Brown's administration last week released preliminary draft regulations on fracking. To its credit, the California Division of Oil, Gas and Geothermal Resources wants energy companies, for the first time, to disclose where they are engaged in hydraulic fracturing. Regulators say the rules contain some of the strongest provisions in the nation, including a requirement that oil companies test the integrity of their wells to guard against leaks of fracturing chemicals and report those test results to the state.

That's a step forward, but the draft regulations would still allow energy companies to withhold what kind of chemicals they are using, if they deem their formulas to be "trade secrets." Industry officials say disclosure of proprietary formulas would stifle competition and prevent extraction of an important natural resource.

Sorry, but as valuable as fossil fuels are, California groundwater is a much more treasured resource, and it needs to be protected. California must insist on full disclosure on fracking chemicals. If regulators think they lack the authority to order such disclosure, then the Legislature will need to pass legislation to make it the law of the land.

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Editorial: California must insist on full disclosure of chemicals used in oil and gas 'fracking' Sacramento Bee, The

12/23/2012

For decades in California, energy companies have used a method called hydraulic fracturing, or "fracking," to extract deposits of oil and natural gas from deep underground. The process involves injecting pressurized water, sand and chemical additives into a wellbore to fracture the rock formations to get at the fossil fuels.

The oil industry lauds hydraulic fracturing for unlocking enormous amounts of domestic gas and oil. In a recent letter to The Bee, Catherine Reheis-Boyd , president of the Western States Petroleum Association , said that this process "has been employed in California for 60 years and there has never been evidence that it has caused harm to water supplies or the environment."

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The reality is, with fracking, we just don't know. The process has been little studied in California and nationwide by independent scientists. Only now is the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency launching a truly independent study of how fracking could affect drinking water supplies. The EPA released a progress report on that study last week, and hopes to have some firmer results next year, assuming the oil industry allows it to study a site before and after fracking.

Here in the Golden State, the stakes couldn't be higher. California is the nation's third-largest producer of oil, and is home to the largest oil shale formation in the continental United States – the Monterey Shale. Oil companies are preparing to expand exploratory wells into that deep deposit, which runs from Los Angeles to Northern California and is thought to contain 15 billion barrels of oil.

Under pressure from environmentalists, the administration of Gov. Jerry Brown last week released preliminary draft regulations on fracking. To its credit, the California Division of Oil , Gas and Geothermal Resources wants energy companies, for the first time, to disclose where they are engaged in hydraulic fracturing. Regulators say the proposed rules contain some of the strongest provisions in the nation, including a requirement that oil companies test the integrity of their wells to guard against leaks of fracturing chemicals and report those test results to the state.

That's a step forward, but the draft regulations would still allow energy companies to withhold what kind of chemicals they are using, if they deem their formulas to be "trade secrets." Industry officials say disclosure of proprietary formulas would stifle competition and prevent extraction of an important natural resource.

Sorry, but as valuable as fossil fuels are, California groundwater is a much more treasured resource, and it needs to be protected. We don't allow food companies to withhold the fact they might be adding carcinogenic chemicals to their recipes. Why should we allow oil companies to do the same with fracking?

California must insist on full disclosure on fracking chemicals. If regulators think they lack the authority to order such disclosure, then the Legislature will need to pass legislation to make it the law of the land.

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Job numbers gain despite regulation complaints
Dayton Daily News - Online

12/22/2012

Steve Staub, president of Staub Manufacturing Solutions on Stop Eight Road in Vandalia looks over undeveloped land he owns behind his existing buildings. Staub said rules protecting the city of Dayton's wellfield limit his ability to expand on the site, which is above the underground water wellfield serving Dayton and Montgomery County. Staff photo by Jim Witmer

Steve Staub, president of Staub Manufacturing Solutions on Stop Eight Road in Vandalia looks over undeveloped land he owns behind his existing buildings. Staub said rules protecting the city of Dayton's wellfield limit his ability to expand on the site, which is above the underground water wellfield serving Dayton and Montgomery County. Staff photo by Jim Witmer

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's announcement this month of a long-delayed rule tightening air pollution limits on soot has revived one of this past election season's hottest debates: whether government regulations are crushing small businesses.

"And so it begins," said Sen. James Inhofe, R-Okla., ranking member of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, in a Dec. 14 news release. "(The new rule) is the first in an onslaught of post-election rule makings that will place considerable burdens on our struggling economy and eventually push us over the 'regulatory cliff.'"

It was a common theme from candidates and businesses during the 2012 election. In their campaign swings through the Miami Valley this year, Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney and U.S. Senate candidate and Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel invariably drew cheers from crowds when they denounced the impact government regulations have on small businesses.

But economic data show an economy on the mend with businesses moving forward despite the existence of the very regulations that generated so much heat on the campaign trail. Is the regulation gripe just an applause line, or is there real meat behind the argument that small businesses — the very backbone of the nation's economy — would be freed up to do more hiring if they weren't so burdened by the mandates of government?

The answer is yes on both counts. An examination of data on employment, business profits and investment shows that a real recovery is taking place, deflating at least some of the argument that regulations are stifling hiring. But the recovery is also not so robust — or universal — that businesses couldn't benefit from having less paperwork and rules to follow. The question is, which ones to do without? And at what cost?

"Who would want to turn back the clock and put lead in gasoline, allow the mercury to be spewed into the air, want to drink arsenic?" said Jack Shaner, deputy director of the Ohio Environmental Council, arguing that the existing rules save lives. "These protections are prudent, efficient and necessary."

Businesses aren't looking to scrap regulations that protect the "safety and the welfare of the general public," said Chris Ferruso, legislative director for the National Federation of Independent Business/Ohio. But they are, he said, looking for middle ground, a "common sense" test.

"Smart regulation requires a balanced approach, and many Ohio businesses tell me they have been held back by the burden and uncertainty of increasing red tape," said U.S. Sen. Rob Portman, R-Ohio. "With our economy still struggling I believe we must build a more job-friendly regulatory system."

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But if the regulatory system is truly unfriendly to business, the economy has picked up in spite of it. In November, unemployment nationally fell to 7.7 percent, the lowest rate since 2008, while private sector jobs have increased for 33 consecutive months, according to U.S. Department of Labor Secretary Hilda L. Solis, adding some 5.6 million jobs to the work force.

Corporate earnings were up too — 18.6 percent in the third quarter over the same period last year, hitting $1.75 trillion, according to the U.S. Department of Commerce. After-tax profits were at the greatest percentage of Gross Domestic Product in U.S. history, according to CNNMoney.com.

Companies don't appear to be sitting on their profits either. During the first three years of recovery from the 2009 recession, businesses invested heavily in equipment and software. When compared to a similar time frame after the recessions of 1982, 1991 and 2001, the investments' share of GDP more than doubled, according to a study by Lawrence Mishel and Isaac Shapiro of the liberal think tank the Economic Policy Institute.

"The track record of business investment during this recovery is in stark contrast to claims made by business trade associations that government regulations are holding back the economy," Mishel and Shapiro wrote in their Aug. 8 report.

In an interview with the Dayton Daily News, Mishel said, "If you watch what businesses are doing rather than what they are saying, then you can see that regulation is not presenting them a problem. Regulation is minding the people's business, and that's what people want."

Balancing act

The tension between businesses and the watchdogs that regulate them is longstanding and, it would seem, never ending. The balancing act is finding how to protect the public from harm while not burdening businesses with so many rules and costs they are unable to thrive.

And that's the rub.

"We feel there is too often regulation for regulation's sake that has more to do with power and control of the regulating entity as opposed to any appreciable or demonstrative benefit for the public" said Dan Navin, assistant vice president of tax and economic policy for the Ohio Chamber of Commerce.

Countered U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown, D-Ohio: Regulations and economic development are not mutually exclusive.

"My first priority is creating jobs and helping Ohio businesses and middle-class families grow and thrive," Brown said. "It is a false choice to suggest that you cannot have strong consumer safety and public health laws and a productive business climate that creates jobs."

It is rarely discussed during political campaigns, but some regulations — such as those requiring steel mill emissions scrubbers — create jobs in construction and manufacturing, said Sandy Buchanan, executive director of Ohio Citizen Action, a government watchdog group. And she argued that the Great Recession, which wiped out millions of jobs, was caused in part by weak regulations of the financial sector.

"If not for the Clean Air Act, EPA and environmental protections, how would we as a society protect citizens when they flip on their tap, when they fill up their car, when they are walking outside taking a breath of air?" Shaner said. "We cannot do that on a voluntary basis. We tried that. It was called the Industrial Revolution."

A local example

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Although the bulk of complaints from businesses are directed at the federal government, other rulemaking authorities come under criticism as well.

Steve Staub, president of Staub Manufacturing Solutions in Vandalia, said the local rules protecting the city of Dayton well field, which lies under his facility, limit his ability to expand.

"It's a real sticky point. We'd like to add some more equipment but we can't expand here," said Staub, who argues that rules limiting hazardous materials in the protection area should permit existing businesses to expand — particularly since departures of businesses like Delphi would appear to have diminished the risk to the well field.

It's a classic case of business versus environment and how much protection is too much protection?

Timothy Downs, Dayton's deputy director of economic development, doesn't apologize for the regulations, which were put in place after the 1996 Sherwin Williams fire threatened the well field that serves 500,000 Montgomery County residents.

"It's one of our greatest assets as a community. It is a natural resource," Downs said. "My office is working on a marketing campaign to attract businesses, companies that use water to come to Dayton because we have such good water and such quantities of it."

Cost v. benefits

A spokeswoman for President Barack Obama said the administration works diligently to balance the health, welfare and safety of the American people at the same time as it promotes economic growth.

"The President's regulatory approach has been consistent from the start of the administration and we intend to continue that approach moving forward," said Moira Mack, spokeswoman for the president's office of management and budget.

Both Obama and Ohio Gov. John Kasich have issued executive orders requiring a cost-benefit analysis before regulations are issued and during reviews of existing laws. Those rules, along with various laws and agency public hearing policies, require that the people and businesses affected by the rules be brought into the discussions before the rules are finalized.

Portman and U.S. Rep. Mike Turner, R-Dayton, both introduced bills that they say would improve the process, although neither passed in the current Congress.

Turner said the Obama administration unleashed an "unprecedented amount" of rules and regulations over the past four years. "A number of these from the EPA are a burden to family farmers and the agriculture industry as a whole in Ohio," he said in an emailed statement.

But Tom Traynor, professor of economics at Wright State University, disputed the argument that Obama has overseen an unusually high number of rules and regulations.

"When compared to previous administrations the total number of new regulations (Final Rulings) in the first three years of the Obama administration were roughly the same as during the first three years of the G.W. Bush administration and had an annual average similar to the numbers of the previous 15 years," said Traynor, citing data he analyzed from the the U.S. Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs.

Affordable Care Act

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The U.S. EPA is a frequent punching bag for anti-regulation conservatives, as is the new health care reform law, known officially as the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and unofficially as Obamacare.

Business advocates say investment — and hiring — would increase if there wasn't so much uncertainty over the health law's impact.

Steve Bowser has long provided health insurance to his employees at Bowser-Morner Inc. of Huber Heights. But he said he is unsure if his benefits package will comply with the law. And he is upset that his insurer raised his rates 21 percent for next year, blaming the new law.

"There is so much confusion and uncertainty surrounding it, I think it is immobilizing companies," said Bowser, president of the commercial testing laboratory and engineering firm.

Phil Parker, chief executive officer and president of the Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce, who opposed the law, said small businesses with fewer than 50 employees are reluctant to hire more because they would then have to comply with the Affordable Care Act and pay a tax penalty if they don't insure their workers.

"Why would a guy force himself into paying a tax or something more when these new regulations are going to force him into a structure that isn't going to be advantageous to him?" Parker said.

Supporters of the Affordable Care Act say spreading the burden of health care is a matter of fairness. Every company and person with health insurance is paying — in the form of higher premiums — for the uncompensated care hospitals provide to uninsured people, said John Bowblis, assistant professor of economics at the Farmer School of Business at Miami University.

Traynor also doesn't buy the argument that businesses will stop hiring just to avoid complying with the Affordable Care Act. If companies need employees to provide goods and services customers want, they'll hire them, he said.

"When it comes to explanations for the low employment levels, by far the biggest reason firms aren't hiring more workers is that they don't need more workers," he said. "They are able to satisfy their customers with their current work forces."

Bowser and Staub both said there are good reasons for government regulations, even as they are critical of some specific ones, and both said they remember the days before modern regulations led to a cleaner environment.

But Staub said the underregulation was replaced with over-regulation.

"A couple of generations back (businesses) did some bad things to our environment and to our earth," he said. "I think at times we've gone so far the other way to protect it that we're not using common sense."

Regulations and proposals opposed by some businesses:

Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act: Requires all Americans to have health insurance, provides subsidies to help lower income people and some smaller companies afford insurance and establishes penalties for companies with 50 or more employees that do not meet the law's requirements.

Greenhouse gas limits: Establishes emission limits for power plants, refineries and other sources of the fossil fuel emissions blamed for global warming.

Ozone rules: Postponed rules on smog reduce permissible levels of ozone emitted by cars, power plants, mining and drilling and factories.

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Industrial boiler emission limits: Proposed rule requires equipment be installed to limit toxic emissions such as mercury from boilers used by industrial facilities, hospitals and universities.

Hydraulic fracturing rules: Rules under development at the state and federal level govern the mining of natural gas and oil using hydraulic fracturing, and disposal of the polluted water that it generates.

Truth test

Fact checking doesn't end for us after the election. During the presidential campaign, Republican candidates like Mitt Romney and Josh Mandel often criticized "excessive" government regulation to slam their opponents' commitment to job growth. But the speeches often lacked specifics, so we decided to put the comments through a truth test by interviewing business people, examining economic data and researching the regulations' impact on the public, environment and jobs.

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The new robber barons
Independent & Free Press, The

12/22/2012

- Paul Driessen (Bio and Archives) Saturday, December 22, 2012

An oil and natural gas boom is underway in the United States, born of horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracturing, or "fracking." It has created tens of thousands of well-paying jobs directly, and hundreds of thousands more in hundreds of businesses that supply and support the industry and its workers.

In North Dakota, the unemployment rate is 2.4 percent, in large part because of a huge increase in natural gas and crude oil production from deep shale rocks that yielded nothing prior to fracking. The new technology is also driving job growth, higher incomes, and increased tax revenues for hard-pressed state and local governments in Louisiana, Pennsylvania, Texas and other states.

Meanwhile, 350 miles north of Edmonton, Alberta, other innovators are producing billions of barrels from oil sands that stretch across an area the size of Utah. Shallow deposits are accessible via surface mining, while deeper lodes are tapped using in situ drilling and steam injection. As work is completed in an area, the land is restored to woodlands, grasslands, lakes and marshes, and the process moves on.

As with fracking, the oil sands create tens of thousands of high-paying jobs and generate billions in revenue, benefitting people from Fort McMurray, Calgary and Vancouver to Ottawa and Halifax, and throughout the United States. Construction of the Keystone XL Pipeline would multiply these benefits.

And yet, despite ample evidence that responsible development of these enormous energy resources could power a national economic, manufacturing and employment renaissance, the Obama Administration's environmental ideologies and political debts to radical green groups could delay or stymie progress.

The new robber barons in the Executive Branch and Congress are not content only with taxing job creators and saddling our children and great grandchildren with trillion-dollar IOUs. They are using hard-earned tax money to finance wind, solar, biofuel and other schemes that primarily reward crony capitalist campaign contributors. They're also locking up centuries' of oil, gas, coal and uranium that could generate an economic revival, millions of jobs, and many billions in federal, state and local royalty and tax revenues.

Some say the way these robber barons use, abuse and ignore laws to advance this agenda reminds them of the infamous James Gang, which plundered banks and trains until Northfield, Minnesota citizens ended their lawless ways. Others say a better example is the Chicago-based Al Capone mob.

Still others point to the Capitol Hill "fiscal cliff" negotiations, as providing clues as to what lies ahead. President Obama says he favors a "balanced" approach to avoid fiscal calamity, but insists on raising taxes on high-income citizens – and will not discuss reining in entitlement expenditures that are lead life preservers on taxpayers and our economy. His Treasury Secretary tells us, "There are no options."

The President's unique concept of "balance" also defines his "all of the above" energy program. Like Humpty Dumpty, his words mean just what he chooses them to mean – as in all of the above-ground projects, but none of the below-ground resources. Perhaps the real question is, who is to be master ... of our lives, natural resources, nation and pursuit of happiness?

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Thus the Administration banned oil development on 1.6 million more acres of federal lands in the West and millions more on the Outer Continental Shelf, while delaying leasing and drilling in still more areas – on top of vast acreage and resources that Congress placed off limits through legislation. The ruling czars and robber barons also imposed ethanol-in-gasoline requirements that turn 40% of the nation's corn crop into fuel, converting an area the size of Missouri from growing food crops to producing fuel that we could get by drilling, and driving up the cost of countless food products.

Their wind and solar programs waste billions of tax dollars on expensive, unreliable electricity projects that blanket habitats and steal our wildlife heritage, in violation of clear environmental laws.

Meanwhile, EPA issued still more hugely expensive rules that effectively ban the use of coal in electricity generation – sending coal's contribution from 45% a few years ago to 35% today, and killing thousands of mining and utility jobs. Its latest rules demand that the transportation sector slash its soot emissions another 20% – ostensibly to reduce asthma, other illnesses and "thousands" of premature deaths.

In reality, the only health or environmental benefits exist in EPA computer models, press releases and cover-ups of illegal experiments on humans, whose response to being subjected to "dangerous" levels of soot actually disproved EPA's claim that tougher standards are needed. EPA has also ignored the significant health risks caused by its regulations, especially for now unemployed older workers.

In the midst of all this, at the just concluded United Nations climate change negotiations in Doha, Qatar, Obama Administration representatives entertained brazen proposals to require developed countries to compensate less developed countries for "climate change damages" – under a wealth redistribution scheme that could potentially cost United States taxpayers hundreds of billions of dollars. Also in the works are EPA rules, laws and treaty agreements to force the US to curb fossil fuel use and CO2 emissions.

Inconvenient facts about these decisions were simply ignored – or treated much the same way as Steven Spielberg handled his powerful and entertaining Lincoln movie. It was released after the 2012 elections, many believe, so that minority and other voters would learn too late that it was our sixteenth president and other Republicans who championed the end of slavery – and northern and southern Democrats who fought to prevent passage of the Thirteenth Amendment, outlawing the heinous practice.

The robber barons say whatever is expedient – and then pursue policies that undermine the overall public welfare, while postponing many costly and politically explosive actions until after elections.

They also ignore and undermine the recent International Energy Agency forecast that, by 2020, the USA could be producing more oil than Saudi Arabia, currently the largest oil producer on the globe, thanks to advances in seismic, fracking, deepwater drilling and other technologies. A March 2012 Citi Global Problems and Solutions report painted a clear picture of the benefits that domestic energy development could bring – if government "public servants" and environmental "public interest" groups would permit it.

Cumulatively, the new production, reduced consumption and numerous activities associated with these technologies "could increase real GDP by an additional 2% to 3%, creating from 2.7 million to as many as 3.6 million net new jobs by 2020," the Citi report stated. They could also shrink America's "current account deficit" by 2.4% of GDP (a 60% reduction in the current budget deficit) and cause the dollar to appreciate in real terms by +1.6 to +5.4% – all by 2020.

In the next few decades, Citi concluded, the energy sector "could drive an extraordinary and timely revitalization and reindustrialization of the U.S. economy, creating jobs and bringing prosperity to millions of Americans, just as the national economy struggles to recover from the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression." It would also "improve national energy security and reverse perennial current account deficits" for decades to come.

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

However, as the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research has made clear, these enormous benefits "are at risk if new restrictions are imposed on the industry, from delays in approval of liquid natural gas exports, to opposition to expanding ports for coal and gas export, to opposition to pipelines and refineries, and to the threat of redundant federal regulations on the technology of hydraulic fracturing." Worse, foregoing these enormous benefits would bring little or no improvement to the environment or human welfare.

Abundant, reliable, affordable energy is the backbone of the US and global economy. Perhaps one day renewable energy will become a viable alternative to the hydrocarbons that sustain jobs and energize virtually everything we make, ship, eat and do. Until then, America and the world need to promote regulatory sanity and increased production of our enormous base of coal, oil and natural gas resources.

Paul Driessen is a senior fellow with the Committee For A Constructive Tomorrow and Center for the Defense of Free Enterprise, nonprofit public policy institutes that focus on energy, the environment, economic development and international affairs. Paul Driessen is author of Eco-Imperialism: Green power, Black death

Paul Can be reached at: .(JavaScript must be enabled to view this email address)

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

Eco-group supports more EPA research on fracking
Akron Beacon Journal - Online, The

12/22/2012

Ohio Utica Shale

Eco-group supports more EPA research on fracking

By Bob Downing Published: December 22, 2012

Statement of Bruce Baizel, Earthworks' Oil & Gas Accountability Project Director, on EPA's Progress Report on its study of the potential impacts of hydraulic fracturing on drinking water resources.

Washington, D.C. & Durango, CO -- Earthworks welcomes today's progress report on EPA's study of hydraulic fracturing's impacts on drinking water.

It represents a step towards EPA's first real scientific inquiry into the safety of fracking -- a step nearly ten years in the making. EPA's 2004 study of the subject cannot be called science, as it was publicly revealed to be partially written by the very industry it studied.

To date, the only actual science on the subject -- including EPA's own investigations at Pavillion, WY and Duke University's groundwater studies -- suggests impacts and risks.

Most significant about the progress report is the lack of progress it reports. In its inability to find a single company willing to test water quality before and after drilling and fracking, the EPA is being thwarted in perhaps the most important part of its study of fracking's impacts.

We are not surprised, however. Oil and gas companies' unwillingness to cooperate continues a pattern of obstruction of actual science on the impacts of drilling and hydraulic fracturing. Oil and gas developers and their advocates are quick to claim that fracking is safe, but they are unwilling to put their money where their mouth is. Until they do, the industry has no credibility in the debate about the science and safety of fracking.

We look forward to EPA's continued work on a scientific assessment of fracking during the coming year.

More Information:

EPA - Study of the Potential Impacts of Hydraulic Fracturing on Drinking Water Resources, Progress Report

Earthworks - Hydraulic Fracturing 101

Click here to read or leave a comment on this story.

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

Factbox: U.S. EPA studies five ways fracking may affect water
Reuters - Online
New York, NY
Jonathan Leff
12/22/2012

n" vocusinstance="0">(Reuters) - The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's landmark study into the effects of hydraulic fracturing drilling technology on water supply is examining the issue from five different angles.

The study, which may prove pivotal in the government's regulation of the 'fracking' technology that has unlocked generations' worth of U.S. oil and gas supplies, won't be released for public comment and peer review until 2014, but its framework was released in detail on Friday.

For the full report: r.reuters.com/jec84t

These are the five stages of the hydraulic fracturing water cycle being examined:

Water Use in Hydraulic Potential Drinking Water Issues Fracturing Operations Water Acquisition Water AvailabilityImpact of water withdrawal on water quality Chemical Mixing Release to surface and ground water(e.g. onsite spills and/or leaks) Chemical transportation accidents Well Injection Accidental release to ground or surface water (e.g., well malfunctions) Fracturing fluid migration into drinking water aquifersFormation fluid displacement into aquifers Mobilization of subsurface formation materials into aquifers Flowback and Produced Water Release to surface and ground water Leakage from onsite storage into drinking water resources Improper pit construction, maintenance, and/or closure Wastewater Treatment and Waste Disposal Surface and/or subsurface discharge into surface and ground water Incomplete treatment of wastewater and solid residuals Wastewater transportation accidents

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

EPA's fracturing study on track for late 2014
Houston Chronicle - Online

12/22/2012

The federal government is on track to release in late 2014 its study on whether natural gas drilling and hydraulic fracturing pollute drinking water, the Environmental Protection Agency said Friday in a progress report on the closely watched analysis.

Although the update itself did not contain conclusions about the potential effects hydraulic fracturing could have on drinking water resources, it outlined the framework for 18 research projects already under way.

Critics have questioned the EPA's approach, which involves analyzing existing data from well sites around the country, computer modeling, laboratory studies and assessing the toxicity of chemicals used in hydraulic fracturing fluids and drilling wastewater.

Hydraulic fracturing, credited with unlocking vast reserves of oil and natural gas nationwide, involves blasting sand, water and chemicals deep underground to open up the pores of dense rock formations and free fossil fuels trapped within.

Fears of water contamination from the chemicals pumped underground and the water that flows out of wells have accompanied a surge in horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracturing in Texas, North Dakota, Pennsylvania and other states.

The congressionally mandated study could be used as the foundation for future regulation and legislation governing hydraulic fracturing, now generally regulated at the state level.

The study is examining the relationship between water and hydraulic fracturing at almost every stage of the drilling process, from first acquiring water to use at wells to ultimately disposing of wastewater.

So far, agency scientists are scrutinizing data from seven sources, including information provided by nine hydraulic fracturing service companies, more than 300 well files supplied by oil and gas operators and thousands of chemical disclosure records filed on a voluntary registry known as FracFocus. The EPA also is looking at spill reports from Colorado, New Mexico and Pennsylvania to identify why fluids and wastewater were released.

The EPA said it is using computer modeling to evaluate how withdrawing large volumes of water in both dry and humid environments is affecting drinking water sources.

The agency said it is using computer modeling of six different scenarios to explore the likelihood that gas and fluid could migrate from deep shale formations to overlying aquifers. The EPA also said it is currently working to identify what conditions might be associated with the underground migration of gases and fluids to drinking water sources and is exploring the extent to which inadequately constructed wells, nearby natural faults and close man-made wells affect that movement.

The EPA also is investigating whether common municipal wastewater treatment processes are successful at removing harmful materials - including naturally radioactive elements pulled from the ground - in wastewater flowing from hydraulically fractured wells.

The environmental group Earthworks noted that the EPA's report showed it had been unable to find a single company willing to test water quality at a site before and after drilling and fracturing. "The EPA is being thwarted in perhaps the

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

most important part of its study on fracking impacts," the group said.

Meanwhile, the American Petroleum Institute's upstream senior policy adviser, Stephanie Meadows, noted that a report by Battelle Memorial Institute, a not-for-profit research organization, released last summer called for more collaboration on the study between EPA and the industry. Meadows said the EPA has responded with some "constructive course corrections, including the formation of technical roundtables that include industry expertise."

"More collaboration, continued transparency and stakeholder involvement are essential elements for any scientifically sound study, and we hope that the rest of this process remains open and any data released has the necessary context," Meadows said.

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

report on its research into potential impacts of KQV-AM

12/22/2012

and headed on in and you also get some backups from Greentree will measure of approaching before the tunnels from the West but other than that no major problems no accidents to speak up for just one in degrees with scattered snow showers mingled story additional English naturalist most locations are your ready for tonight just for his integration wins or sure go by older twenty two Sunday lecture called sunshine thirty seven Monday most occultist as Chancellor Sobol you on your forty two zero sequelae I read on Wednesday called we would remix auditory object you drink Scout launch weather center meteorologist onto the ball and looking around the area right now we got some snow showers and they have passed we all are of pretty much all under cloudy conditions and headed up north towards your units cloudy Darren thirty two degrees in Washington cloudy skies now thirty degrees heading out he started near Latrobe in the area for two reasons under cloudy skies beaver Falls is calling skies twenty eight degrees here in downtown Pittsburgh it's cloudy and the temperature is thirty degrees who's watching your home when you're not there could be a burglar or burglars prefer breaking when they think no one is home and no one . don't be an easy target for intruders protect her home of the free security system monitored by EDT the leader in home security call now and get free hardware free medical and fire alert and free activation and eight hundred fifty dollar value : right now and you'll also get six free sensors six points of protection for freight just call protect your home or authorized ADT dealer in one eight seven seven six six six fifty three eighty one Newgate 24-hour protection and there's no cost for parts or activation call now a lot of free security system monitored by ABT : one eight seven seven eight six six fifty three eighty one ninety nine dollar installation charge thirty six month monitoring agreement thirty five ninety nine per month total package includes six door window sensors labor charges may apply cultural terms conditions to the sovereign protector home license numbers call now one eight seven seven six six six fifty three eighty one thinking of a news time now is three eleven : light of criticism it's received for not being more aggressive in its inspections of section eight housing properties County Housing Authority says it's going to make some changes if Gordy was ordered by the office of Inspector General within the Housing and Urban Development for paying back more than fifteen thousand dollars in federal funds after an audit last year found that most of the section eight housing units failed to meet its standards the authority's executive director Frank Visio tells a PG that inspectors of the dumb looking at properties in the new training is expected to take place early next year Pennsylvania Turnpike commission announced today that it plans to build another leg of the southern beltway in a six hundred thirty two . five million dollar Roger scheduled to begin in 2014 crews reporting that the 13 mile toll highway will run between Route 22 when Robinson in Washington County and Interstate 79 in software yet in the Allegheny County line is expected to take six years to complete the project will be paid for with a mix of state funding bonds and federal loans no toll revenue will be used for project confirmable protection agency is released to reporters report on its research into potential impacts of natural gas hydraulic fracturing and trolling for Enrico drinking water heater and update release yesterday doesn't come to any conclusions on the final report would be released in 2014 the EPA says information on tracking chemicals has been collected from nine companies and 24,945 wells computer analysis is also being taught well construction the EPA says it's working with scientists in the industry and environmental groups to determine any possible impacts are recurring a sampling of five locations in Colorado North Dakota Pennsylvania and Texas has been completed and lab studies are being done on drilling for wastewater industry in many states are saying the process is safe when done properly but critics are disputing that claim use time now is 313 and just ahead of the ATV sport light is just a LASIK vision Institute when I decided to have LASIK surgery for lots of reasons I went to doctors with experience of LASIK vision Institute independent doctors have performed nearly 1,000,000 procedures are very affordable with prices starting as low as $299 for I had a financing programs make it easy obliges the LASIK vision Institute was a life-changing experience if you wonder if you're a candidate for LASIK to improve your vision and enjoy more activities without the hassle of glasses or contacts call the LASIK vision Institute to set up a free the valuation call a toll-free call now for your free LASIK evaluation of pre-

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

Bruce Baizel: Most significant about EPA's progress report on fracking is the lack of progress it reports
YubaNet

12/22/2012

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EPA releases progress report on fracking study
KFDA-TV - Online

12/22/2012

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Online: http://www.epa.gov/hfstudy/

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

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Observer-Reporter - Online

12/22/2012

Published Dec 22, 2012 at 7:34 am (Updated Dec 22, 2012 at 7:34 am)

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What you Need to Know

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

From the editorial advisory board: Hydraulic fracturing
Daily Camera - Online, The

12/22/2012

From the editorial advisory board: Hydraulic fracturing

Posted:

12/22/2012 01:00:00 AM MST

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The study's counts of animals sickened and killed may seem negligible, however the appalling details warn sharply. And, if multitudes of tainted well-seeming animals enter the food system this frack-tamination is more than a tragedy for a few.

Colorado has a pressing new cause for vigilance and resistance. Our North Fork Valley, hailed as "America's Tuscany" for its fast growing organic food and wine production, may see 20,000 acres leased for fracking this February, unless stopped by petitions.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has an office to address such encroachment onto our food supply called the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, rumored to be able to giving real heartburn to the oil and gas industry. Colorado, be ready.

Anne B. Butterfield

annebbuttefield@yahoo.com

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The EPA estimates nearly 140 billion gallons of water are used to fracture 35,000 wells yearly. That is equivalent to annual water consumption of 14 million homes. One shale well can use up to 10 million gallons, 4 million pounds of proppant and 80 tons of chemicals. Here is a list of a few fracking chemicals (each have more than ten severe health impacts) that petroleum companies tried to keep secret: ethylene glycol, hydrochloric acid, formaldehyde, ethylbenzene, peroxydisulfates, methanol, sodium hydroxide, toluene, and xylene. Impacts include injury to nervous systems, kidneys

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Fighting fracking is a worthwhile endeavor.

Spense Havlick

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KHOU-TV - Online

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Online: http://www.epa.gov/hfstudy/

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

EPA study seen as soft on fracking
KRDO-FM - Online

12/22/2012

EPA study seen as soft on fracking

Final results not expected until 2014

By Steve Hargreaves

POSTED: 12:55 PM MST Dec 21, 2012 UPDATED: 08:15 PM MST Dec 21, 2012

iStock/BanksPhotos

NEW YORK (CNNMoney) -

The Environmental Protection Agency released a progress report Friday that reiterated its support for increasing natural gas development in the United States.

"As the administration and EPA has made clear, natural gas has a central role to play in our energy future," the agency said in a press release. "The administration continues to work to expand production of this important domestic resource safely and responsibly."

EPA outlined several steps it's taking to assess the impacts fracking -- short for hydraulic fracturing -- has on the nation's water supply, as directed by Congress in 2009.

Steps include:

-- Analyzing existing data from natural gas companies on chemicals and practices used

-- Modeling how discharging waste might impact the water

-- Lab testing on water discharge

-- Testing fracking chemicals for toxicity

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

EPA Releases Update on Ongoing Hydraulic Fracturing Study
Utility Products Magazine - Online

12/22/2012

The Environmental Protection Agency issued the following news release:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) today provided an update on its ongoing national study currently underway to better understand any potential impacts of hydraulic fracturing on drinking water resources. Results of the study, which Congress requested EPA to complete, are expected to be released in a draft for public and peer review in 2014. The update provided today outlines work currently underway, including the status of research projects that will inform the final study. It is important to note that while this progress report outlines the framework for the final study, it does not draw conclusions about the potential impacts of hydraulic fracturing on drinking water resources, which will be made in the final study.

As the administration and EPA has made clear, natural gas has a central role to play in our energy future, and this important domestic fuel source has extensive economic, energy security, and environmental benefits. The study EPA is currently undertaking is part of EPA's focus to ensure that the Administration continues to work to expand production of this important domestic resource safely and responsibly.

Among the information released today are updates on 18 research projects and details on the agency's research approach as well as next steps for these ongoing projects and analyses. Today's update follows the public release, in November 2011, of the agency's final study plan, which underwent scientific peer review and public comment.

EPA has engaged stakeholders, including industry, to ensure that the study reflects current practices in hydraulic fracturing. EPA continues to request data and information from the public and stakeholders and has put out a formal request for information which can be accessed through the federal register at: https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2012/11/09/2012-27452/r equest-for-information-to-inform-hydraulic-fracturing-research-related-to-drinking-water-resources

EPA also expects to release a draft report of results from the study in late 2014. The study has been designated a Highly Influential Scientific Assessment, meaning it will receive the highest level of peer review in accordance with EPA's peer review handbook before it is finalized. The 2014 draft report will synthesize the results from the ongoing projects together with the scientific literature to answer the study's main research questions.

EPA's Science Advisory Board (SAB) is forming a panel of independent experts which will review and provide their individual input on the ongoing study to EPA. The SAB will provide an opportunity for the public to offer comments for consideration by the individual panel members. For more information on the SAB process, please visit: http://yosemite.epa.gov/sab/sabpeople.nsf/WebCommittees/BOARD

More information: www.epa.gov/hfstudy .

Contact: Julia P. Valentine, 202/564-0496, valentine.julia@epa.gov

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

EPA releases progress report on fracking study
Parkersburg News and Sentinel - Online

12/22/2012

/ News / WV News /

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December 22, 2012

Associated Press

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Parkersburg News and Sentinel

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

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Daily Camera - Online, The

12/22/2012

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

Spense Havlick

"First, do no harm" is the main precept of the medical profession. Surely we may borrow and apply it to hydraulic gas fracturing, "fracking."

Many claim fracking is inherently unsafe and detrimental to our waters, air and public health. I would like to see better scientific explanations describing what is safe and what is not in the fracking environment. We need better and stronger operational regulations and punishment when the prescribed rules are ignored or handled irresponsibly.

Fracking requires water, sand and chemicals. Fracking firms have been slow to disclose what these chemicals are and how they would safely dispose of them. One report claims that 93 percent of the chemicals used are dangerous. Industry's unwillingness to explain has given it a black eye. There are 250 communities that have passed resolutions banning fracking. Boulder County has now developed what experts describe as the toughest fracking regulations.

One serious concern is how current fracking practices affect underground waters. The gas is seldom near a water source. Thus when fracking is done by incompetent "wildcatters" there are dire consequences.

I would like to believe that fracking, when done properly, will produce gas that will enable us to achieve a coal-carbon-free environment. We know the detrimental impact of burning coal.

We need access to natural gas from shale if we are to free ourselves from transferring our wealth to countries whose government we would otherwise ignore except that they are petroleum producers.

Marc Raizman

The issues surrounding fracking will not be resolved by a flurry of local regulations, lawsuits, and countersuits, and certainly not by gold-rush development. They can be resolved by sensible and comprehensive state regulations.

I recently viewed a presentation on energy development delivered by Boulder economist Pete Morton at Utah State University. (The presentation is available on YouTube. I can provide a link if you email me at the address below.) Among other things, Dr. Morton identifies two major problems with energy development in general. First, prices, and existing taxes do not fully reflect the true costs of energy development. Second, energy development tends to occur in boom and bust cycles, with the effects of the booms and busts very unevenly distributed. He recommends a "phased" development trajectory, with impacts mitigated by specific policies.

In the words of Dr. Morton:

"Phased development can be implemented by limiting the acres leased, limiting the number of drilling permits granted, limiting the number of drill rigs permitted to operate in an area at one time, capping the number of wells allowed, allowing new wells only after old ones are closed and sites fully restored, and by placing some areas off-limits to drilling. Phased development requires full disclosure, collecting baseline data, monitoring environmental and socioeconomic impacts, (through) inspection and enforcement, and adjusting the pace and scale (of development) based on monitoring results."

These policies will be costly, but so are the hidden costs of energy development.

Steve Fisher

What the frack are we doing? Isn't insanity defined as doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results?

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

Hydraulic fracturing and horizontal drilling have made shale oil and gas the "it" fuels for the energy industry. The gold rush like fervor has resulted in a drilling explosion across the country. Natural gas will save our economy and free us from dependence on foreign oil. Shale oil will make America great again. If a little fracking is good, a lot of fracking is great. Let's open the floodgates and frack, baby, frack.

What about the side effects of fracking? We are told it is perfectly safe. The undisclosed chemicals used are forced far down into the earth and then blocked with concrete so that they can never contaminate our water table. "Flowback", the 40 percent of contaminated fluid that does wash back through the well, is disposed of carefully. Methane leaks, which have caused tap water in homes near drilling operations to explode, are rare. One should never light matches near a faucet anyway. Earthquakes? What earthquakes? And the 6.5 billion gallons of water used for hydraulic fracturing in Colorado this year? Nobody will miss it.

Does this sound familiar? Remember when DDT and PCPs were safe? Ever hear of The Love Canal, Exxon-Valdez or Deep Horizon?

Serial exploitation of natural resources is unsustainable. Everybody knows that. So who's crazy, the fracking detractors or the fracking enthusiasts?

Judy Amabile

(The Camera's editorial advisory board members are: Judy Amabile, Anne B. Butterfield, Ed Byrne, Jimmy Calano, Dave Ensign, Clay Evans, Steve Fisher, Spense Havlick, Cinda Kochen, Marc Raizman, and Brian T. Schwartz.)

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

U.S. EPA reports progress on fracking research
Mansfield News-Journal - Online

12/22/2012

WASHINGTON — The Environmental Protection Agency has released a progress report on its research into potential impacts of natural gas hydraulic fracturing and drilling on drinking water.

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KSWO-TV - Online

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Online: http://www.epa.gov/hfstudy/

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

EPA study seen as soft on fracking
www.wcyb.com

12/22/2012

Final results not expected until 2014

By Steve Hargreaves

POSTED: 2:55 PM Dec 21 2012 UPDATED: 10:15 PM Dec 21 2012

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NEW YORK (CNNMoney) -

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

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Journal - Online, The

12/22/2012

/ News / W.Va. News /

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

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Yahoo! Canada

12/22/2012

Sat, 22 Dec, 2012, 5:48 AM EST - Canadian Markets closed

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The final results are not expected until late 2014.

Some see the lack of data or negative comments in Friday's progress report as a positive for the industry.

"It signals that the Obama administration has no real appetite for additional federal regulations until 2014 at the earliest," said Nitzan Goldberger, a natural gas analyst at Eurasia Group, a political risk consultancy. "That's good news for the oil and gas guys."

The Obama administration has tightened some rules around fracking, but for the most part has left regulation up to the states.

Fracking involves injecting massive amounts of water, sand and some chemicals deep underground in a bid to crack shale rock and ease the flow of oil and natural gas.

The process has unleashed an energy boom in the United States, creating thousands of jobs, driving down the price of oil and natural gas and cutting energy imports to levels not seen in decades.

But it's also raised serious concerns over its effects on the environment, including air pollution from trucks and wells, its links to earthquakes and, fears that it is contaminating drinking water.

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

For environmentalists, the negatives seem to outweigh the positives.

Fracking was once seen as a technology that, given the proper regulations, could be done safely and provide a fuel that emits far fewer greenhouse gases than coal. Natural gas was seen as a good alternative to coal, at least until renewables like wind and solar were ready for prime time.

But declining costs for renewables, more instances of water contamination, uncertainly over the heat-trappng nature of natural gas that escapes from wells unburned, and a fear that cheap gas is crowding out wind and solar have led many to change their minds.

Several environmental groups are calling for an immediate ban on fracking, while others favor a gradual phase out combined with greater federal regulation.

On the other side are many analysts and economists that believe this technology can give the United States a significant economic and geopolitical advantage.

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EPA releases progress report on fracking study
Intelligencer - Online, The

12/22/2012

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/ News / W.Va. News /

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The Intelligencer / Wheeling News-Register

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

EPA study seen as soft on fracking
WPTZ-TV - Online

12/22/2012

UPDATED 10:15 PM EST Dec 21, 2012

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

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WDSU-TV - Online

12/22/2012

Westboro Baptist Church announces plans to protest La. Marine's funeral

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

Local News Briefs
Glenwood Springs Post Independent - Online

12/22/2012

Post IndependentGlenwood Springs, CO Colorado

12-car pileup shuts down I-70 in Glenwood Canyon

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Two occupants from one vehicle were transported to Valley View Hospital in Glenwood Springs for minor injuries.

A white pickup, believed to be the first vehicle involved, left the scene.

Anyone with information on this vehicle is asked to contact the Colorado State Patrol at 945-6198.

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Big Steve's Towing, Lucas Towing, Western Slope Towing and West Vail Shell Towing all responded to the scene to help recover vehicles.

With unpredictable winter in full force, the Colorado State Patrol reminds drivers to please take your time and drive carefully, and help ensure that Colorado roadways are safe for everyone this holiday season.

CMC trustees take no action on undisclosed personnel issue

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

EPA study seen as soft on fracking
Pegasus News

12/22/2012

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Final results not expected until 2014

Author: By Steve Hargreaves

Published On: Dec 21 2012 02:55:47 PM EST Updated On: Dec 21 2012 10:15:22 PM EST

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Times Leader - Online

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

EPA Releases Update on Ongoing Hydraulic Fracturing Study
Electric Light and Power

12/22/2012

The Environmental Protection Agency issued the following news release:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) today provided an update on its ongoing national study currently underway to better understand any potential impacts of hydraulic fracturing on drinking water resources. Results of the study, which Congress requested EPA to complete, are expected to be released in a draft for public and peer review in 2014. The update provided today outlines work currently underway, including the status of research projects that will inform the final study. It is important to note that while this progress report outlines the framework for the final study, it does not draw conclusions about the potential impacts of hydraulic fracturing on drinking water resources, which will be made in the final study.

As the administration and EPA has made clear, natural gas has a central role to play in our energy future, and this important domestic fuel source has extensive economic, energy security, and environmental benefits. The study EPA is currently undertaking is part of EPA's focus to ensure that the Administration continues to work to expand production of this important domestic resource safely and responsibly.

Among the information released today are updates on 18 research projects and details on the agency's research approach as well as next steps for these ongoing projects and analyses. Today's update follows the public release, in November 2011, of the agency's final study plan, which underwent scientific peer review and public comment.

EPA has engaged stakeholders, including industry, to ensure that the study reflects current practices in hydraulic fracturing. EPA continues to request data and information from the public and stakeholders and has put out a formal request for information which can be accessed through the federal register at: https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2012/11/09/2012-27452/r equest-for-information-to-inform-hydraulic-fracturing-research-related-to-drinking-water-resources

EPA also expects to release a draft report of results from the study in late 2014. The study has been designated a Highly Influential Scientific Assessment, meaning it will receive the highest level of peer review in accordance with EPA's peer review handbook before it is finalized. The 2014 draft report will synthesize the results from the ongoing projects together with the scientific literature to answer the study's main research questions.

EPA's Science Advisory Board (SAB) is forming a panel of independent experts which will review and provide their individual input on the ongoing study to EPA. The SAB will provide an opportunity for the public to offer comments for consideration by the individual panel members. For more information on the SAB process, please visit: http://yosemite.epa.gov/sab/sabpeople.nsf/WebCommittees/BOARD

More information: www.epa.gov/hfstudy .

Contact: Julia P. Valentine, 202/564-0496, valentine.julia@epa.gov

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

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Marietta Times - Online

12/22/2012

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

Channel 5 News @ 10PM
Channel 5 News at 10 PM - KGWN-TV

12/22/2012

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

EPA study seen as soft on fracking
KTVZ-TV - Online

12/22/2012

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Final results not expected until 2014

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

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WMUR-TV - Online

12/22/2012

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Reports of threats made against several New Hampshire schools

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Local News Briefs
Glenwood Springs Post Independent - Online

12/22/2012

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December, 21 2012 11:26 pm

Local News Briefs

Glenwood Springs Post Independent

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2005 - 2012 Swift Communications, Inc.

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

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WBAL-TV - Online

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

EPA study seen as soft on fracking
KOAT 7

12/22/2012

EPA study seen as soft on fracking

By By Steve Hargreaves

December 21, 2012 08:15 PM MST

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NEW YORK (CNNMoney) -

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EPA releases update on ongoing hydraulic fracturing study - Pinedale, Wyoming Pinedale - Online

12/22/2012

Pinedale Online > News > December 2012 > EPA releases update on ongoing hydraulic fracturing study

EPA releases update on ongoing hydraulic fracturing study

by Environmental Protection Agency

December 21, 2012

WASHINGTON - The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) today (Friday, Dec. 21) provided an update on its ongoing national study currently underway to better understand any potential impacts of hydraulic fracturing on drinking water resources. Results of the study, which Congress requested EPA to complete, are expected to be released in a draft for public and peer review in 2014. The update provided today outlines work currently underway, including the status of research projects that will inform the final study. It is important to note that while this progress report outlines the framework for the final study, it does not draw conclusions about the potential impacts of hydraulic fracturing on drinking water resources, which will be made in the final study.

As the administration and EPA has made clear, natural gas has a central role to play in our energy future, and this important domestic fuel source has extensive economic, energy security, and environmental benefits. The study EPA is currently undertaking is part of EPA s focus to ensure that as the Administration continues to work to expand production of this important domestic resource safely and responsibly.

Among the information released today are updates on 18 research projects and details on the agency s research approach as well as next steps for these ongoing projects and analyses. Today s update follows the public release, in November 2011, of the agency s final study plan, which underwent scientific peer review and public comment.

EPA has engaged stakeholders, including industry, to ensure that the study reflects current practices in hydraulic fracturing. EPA continues to request data and information from the public and stakeholders and has put out a formal request for information which can be accessed through the federal register at: https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2012/11/09/2012-27452/r equest-for-information-to-inform-hydraulic-fracturing-research-related-to-drinking-water-resources

EPA also expects to release a draft report of results from the study in late 2014. The study has been designated a Highly Influential Scientific Assessment, meaning it will receive the highest level of peer review in accordance with EPA s peer review handbook before it is finalized. The 2014 draft report will synthesize the results from the ongoing projects together with the scientific literature to answer the study s main research questions.

EPA's Science Advisory Board (SAB) is forming a panel of independent experts which will review and provide their individual input on the ongoing study to EPA. The SAB will provide an opportunity for the public to offer comments for consideration by the individual panel members. For more information on the SAB process, please visit: http://yosemite.epa.gov/sab/sabpeople.nsf/WebCommittees/BOARD

More information: www.epa.gov/hfstudy

Pinedale Online > News > December 2012 > EPA releases update on ongoing hydraulic fracturing study

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EPA releases progress report on fracking study
WTRF-TV - Online

12/22/2012

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The industry and many states say the process is safe when done properly, but critics dispute that.

Online: http://www.epa.gov/hfstudy/

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EPA study seen as soft on fracking
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"It signals that the Obama administration has no real appetite for additional federal regulations until 2014 at the earliest," said Nitzan Goldberger, a natural gas analyst at Eurasia Group, a political risk consultancy. "That's good news for the oil and gas guys."

The Obama administration has tightened some rules around fracking, but for the most part has left regulation up to the states.

Fracking involves injecting massive amounts of water, sand and some chemicals deep underground in a bid to crack shale rock and ease the flow of oil and natural gas.

The process has unleashed an energy boom in the United States, creating thousands of jobs, driving down the price of oil and natural gas and cutting energy imports to levels not seen in decades.

But it's also raised serious concerns over its effects on the environment, including air pollution from trucks and wells, its

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But declining costs for renewables, more instances of water contamination, uncertainly over the heat-trappng nature of natural gas that escapes from wells unburned, and a fear that cheap gas is crowding out wind and solar have led many to change their minds.

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NRA calls for armed police officer in every school

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By By Steve Hargreaves

December 21, 2012 10:15 PM EST

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12/22/2012

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POSTED: 12:55 PM Dec 21 2012 UPDATED: 8:15 PM Dec 21 2012

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EPA releases progress report on fracking study
Paris News - Online

12/22/2012

EPA releases progress report on fracking study

Posted: Friday, December 21, 2012 4:11 pm

EPA releases progress report on fracking study

Associated Press

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News from around the region and state
Erie Times-News - Online

12/22/2012

Updated: December 21, 2012 11:36 PM EST

News from around the region and state

Erie Times-News

Downed line knocks out power in Millcreek

Penelec officials say a downed power line near West 38th Street and Lancaster Road in Millcreek Township knocked out power to more than 3,000 people Friday.

A Penelec spokesman said power had been returned to about 1,600 people by 9:30 p.m. and he expected power to be restored for the rest shortly after.

Millcreek police and other emergency responders temporarily had to direct traffic at some intersections because of the power outage.

Chautauqua man faces sex abuse charges

FREDONIA -- A Chautauqua County man faces sexual abuse charges after police said he abused a 9-year-old girl multiple times in October and November.

Chautauqua County Sheriff's deputies arrested Ismael Ortiz, 43, of Brocton, on Friday and charged him with three counts of first-degree sexual abuse and one count of endangering the welfare of a child.

Police said Ortiz abused a girl at a home in the village of Brocton, southwest of Fredonia.

He was taken to the Chautauqua County Jail in lieu of $30,000 cash or $60,000 bond.

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Fountain at Pittsburgh's 'point' to reopen in June

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

PITTSBURGH -- The fountain at Point State Park in Pittsburgh will start spraying again June 7.

Fixing the fountain consumed $9.6 million of the $35 million the state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources has spent renovating the state park at the point where the Allegheny and Monongahela rivers flow together to form the Ohio River.

The park renovation began in 2007 and the fountain -- which shoots 150 feet into the air -- was shut down for repairs in April 2009.

The renovated fountain will feature new LED lighting and a raised granite ring and plaza surrounding it.

Altoona man jailed in rape of disabled girl, 15

ALTOONA -- A central Pennsylvania man has been jailed on charges he sexually assaulted a mentally disabled 15-year-old girl at least eight times since July.

Online court records don't list an attorney for 39-year-old Robert Riley Jr., of Altoona.

The Altoona Mirror reported the girl and a relative contacted police earlier this week and told investigators Riley had tried to have sex with the girl several times in recent months.

Police say Riley acknowledged performing a sex act and fondling the girl on at least eight occasions in his basement or attic while his wife was out of the house. Riley's wife applied for a protection-from-abuse order when the rape allegations surfaced.

Riley faces a preliminary hearing on eight counts of rape, involuntary deviant sexual intercourse, and other crime --.

-- staff and wire reports

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WBAL TV

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Reporter - Online, The

12/22/2012

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Posted: 12/21/12 06:24 pm

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US EPA fracking progress report reveals little data, no conclusions
Platts - Online

12/22/2012

US EPA fracking progress report reveals little data, no conclusions

Washington (Platts)--21Dec2012/545 pm EST/2245 GMT

The US Environmental Protection Agency said it has analyzed water samples from four shale plays across the country, but released no test results or preliminary conclusions Friday when it issued a progress report on its investigation of the effects of hydraulic fracturing on drinking water.

Commissioned by a Democratically-controlled Congress in 2010, EPA's investigation is studying the impacts of fracking on drinking water through the entire "life-cycle" of water use in shale oil and shale gas extraction, from its acquisition and withdrawal through injection via fracking to its disposal.

Friday's progress report outlined the 18 separate research projects -- including five local studies -- that EPA is conducting with regards to fracking and drinking water but gave no indication as to what its investigation may have found thus far.

"Information presented as part of this report cannot be used to draw conclusions about the potential impacts to drinking water resources from hydraulic fracturing," the EPA said.

The EPA did note two major modifications to the study from its original design. The first is the inclusion of data from FracFocus, the voluntary fracturing database set up by the Groundwater Protection Council, the Interstate Oil & Gas Commission and the oil and gas industry. EPA said that

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

in many cases FracFocus' data is more accurate geographically and more up-to-date on the chemicals being used.

The EPA also decided not to investigate the phenomena of naturally occurring radioactive materials being unearthed by high pressure fracking and traveling to the surface. That activity is already being investigated by the US Department of Energy and several universities, EPA said, and the agency will rely on those studies to reach any conclusions.

EPA noted in its progress report that it had completed two rounds of water sampling and was preparing to undertake a third in the coming year before it issues a final report in 2014.

In addition to the sampling, EPA said it was running computer simulations of how rock fractures to determine if fracking can contaminate shallow aquifers or open lines of communication between the deeper well bores and shallower water aquifers.

Four of the five locations for water sampling are in shale plays: Dunn County, North Dakota (Bakken); Wise County, Texas (Barnett), and Bradford and Washington Counties, Pennsylvania (Marcellus).

All four were chosen because the location saw a well blowout that leaked fracking fluids or because of homeowner complaints that the quality of the water from their drinking water wells had declined.

A fifth location, Colorado's Las Animas and Huerfano counties, is in the Raton Basin coalbed methane play.

--Bill Holland, bill_holland@platts.com

--Edited by Keiron Greenhalgh, keiron_greenhalgh@platts.com

Product Finder

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

The New Robber Barons- Paul Driessen -Page 2 Townhall

12/22/2012

The New Robber Barons

Paul Driessen

Dec 21, 2012

The new robber barons in the Executive Branch and Congress are not content only with taxing job creators and saddling our children and great grandchildren with trillion-dollar IOUs . They are using hard-earned tax money to finance wind, solar, biofuel and other schemes that primarily reward crony capitalist campaign contributors. They're also locking up centuries' of oil , gas, coal and uranium that could generate an economic revival, millions of jobs, and billions in federal, state and local royalty and tax revenues.

Some say the way these robber barons use, abuse and ignore laws to advance this agenda reminds them of the infamous James Gang , which plundered banks and trains until Northfield, Minnesota citizens ended their lawless ways. Others say a better example is the Chicago-based Al Capone mob.

Still others point to the Capitol Hill "fiscal cliff" negotiations, as providing clues as to what lies ahead. President Obama says he favors a "balanced" approach to avoid fiscal calamity, but insists on raising taxes on high-income citizens – and will not discuss reining in entitlement expenditures that are lead life preservers on taxpayers and our economy. His Treasury Secretary tells us, "There are no options."

The President's unique concept of "balance" also defines his "all of the above" energy program. Like Humpty Dumpty , his words mean just what he chooses them to mean – as in all of the above-ground projects, but none of the below-ground resources. Perhaps the real question is, who is to be master ... of our lives, natural resources, nation and pursuit of happiness?

Thus the Administration banned oil development on 1.6 million more acres of federal lands in the West and millions more on the Outer Continental Shelf, while delaying leasing and drilling in still more areas – on top of vast acreage and resources that Congress placed off limits through legislation. The ruling czars and robber barons also imposed ethanol-in-gasoline requirements that turn 40% of the nation's corn crop into fuel, converting an area the size of Missouri from growing food crops to producing fuel that we could get by drilling, and driving up the cost of countless food products.

Their wind and solar programs waste billions of tax dollars on expensive, unreliable electricity projects that blanket habitats and steal our wildlife heritage , in violation of clear environmental laws.

Meanwhile, EPA issued still more hugely expensive rules that effectively ban the use of coal in electricity generation – sending coal's contribution from 45% a few years ago to 35% today , and killing thousands of mining and utility jobs. Its latest rules demand that the transportation sector slash its soot emissions another 20% – ostensibly to reduce asthma, other illnesses and "thousands" of premature deaths .

In reality, the only health or environmental benefits exist in EPA computer models, press releases and cover-ups of illegal experiments on humans, whose response to being subjected to "dangerous" levels of soot actually disproved EPA's claim that tougher standards are needed. EPA has also ignored the significant health risks caused by its regulations , especially for newly unemployed workers.

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In the midst of all this, at the just concluded United Nations climate change negotiations in Doha, Qatar, Obama Administration representatives entertained brazen proposals to require developed countries to compensate less developed countries for "climate change damages" – under a wealth redistribution scheme that could potentially cost the United States taxpayers hundreds of billions of dollars. Also in the works are EPA rules and treaty agreements to force the US to curb fossil fuel use and CO2 emissions .

Inconvenient facts about these decisions were simply ignored – or treated much the same way as Steven Spielberg handled his powerful and entertaining Lincoln movie . It was released after 2012 elections, many believe so that minority and other voters would learn too late that it was our sixteenth president and other Republicans who championed the end of slavery – and northern and southern Democrats who fought to prevent passage of the Thirteenth Amendment, outlawing the heinous practice.

The robber barons say whatever is expedient – and then pursue policies that undermine the overall public welfare, while postponing many costly and politically explosive actions until after the elections.

They also ignore and undermine the recent International Energy Agency forecast that, by 2020, the USA could be producing more oil than Saudi Arabia , currently the largest oil producer on the globe, thanks to advances in seismic, fracking, deepwater drilling and other technologies. A March 2012 Citi Global Problems and Solutions report painted a clear picture of the benefits that domestic energy development could bring – if government "public servants" and environmental "public interest" groups would permit it.

Cumulatively, the new production, reduced consumption and numerous activities associated with these technologies "could increase real GDP by an additional 2% to 3%, creating from 2.7 million to as high as 3.6 million net new jobs by 2020," the Citi report stated. They could also shrink America's "current account deficit" by 2.4% of GDP (a 60% reduction in the current budget deficit)and cause the dollar to appreciate in real terms by +1.6 to +5.4% – all by 2020.

In the next few decades, Citi concluded, the energy sector "could drive an extraordinary and timely revitalization and reindustrialization of the U.S. economy, creating jobs and bringing prosperity to millions of Americans, just as the national economy struggles to recover from the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression." It would also "improve national energy security and reverse perennial current account deficits" for decades to come.

However, as the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research has made clear, these enormous benefits "are at risk if new restrictions are imposed on the industry, from delays in approval of liquid natural gas exports, to opposition to expanding ports for coal export, to opposition to pipelines and refineries, and to the threat of redundant federal regulations on the technology of hydraulic fracturing." Worse, foregoing these enormous benefits would bring little or no improvement to the environment or human welfare.

Abundant, reliable, affordable energy is the backbone of the US and global economy. Perhaps one day renewable energy will become a viable alternative to the hydrocarbons that sustain jobs and energize virtually everything we make, ship, eat and do. Until then, America and the world need to promote regulatory sanity and increased production of our enormous base of coal, oil and natural gas resources.

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

EPA releases progress report on fracking study
KOTA-TV - Online

12/22/2012

WASHINGTON (AP) - The Environmental Protection Agency has released a progress report on its research into potential impacts of natural gas hydraulic fracturing and drilling on drinking water.

The update released Friday doesn't come to any conclusions and the final report won't be released until 2014.

The EPA says information on fracking chemicals has been collected from nine companies and 24,925 wells. Computer analysis is also being done on well construction.

The EPA says it is working with scientists, the industry, and environmental groups to examine any possible impacts. Sampling at five locations in Colorado, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, and Texas has been completed, and lab studies are being done on drilling wastewater.

The industry and many states say the process is safe when done properly, but critics dispute that.

Online: http://www.epa.gov/hfstudy/

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WHIO-TV - Online

12/22/2012

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EPA study seen as soft on fracking
KCCI-TV - Online

12/22/2012

UPDATED 9:15 PM CST Dec 21, 2012

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The Environmental Protection Agency released a progress report Friday that reiterated its support for increasing natural gas development in the United States.

"As the administration and EPA has made clear, natural gas has a central role to play in our energy future," the agency said in a press release. "The administration continues to work to expand production of this important domestic resource safely and responsibly."

EPA outlined several steps it's taking to assess the impacts fracking -- short for hydraulic fracturing -- has on the nation's water supply, as directed by Congress in 2009.

Steps include:

-- Analyzing existing data from natural gas companies on chemicals and practices used

-- Modeling how discharging waste might impact the water

-- Lab testing on water discharge

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Channel 5 News @ 10PM
Channel 5 News at 10 PM - KGWN-TV

12/22/2012

environmental protection agency has released a progress report on its research into potential impacts of natural gas hydraulic fracturing... Or fracking... On drinking water. The update released today doesn't come to any conclusions and the final report won't be released until 2014. The epa says information on fracking chemicals has been collected from nine companies and about 25- thousand wells. Computer analysis is also being done on well construction. Cheyenne firefighters were out in full force... Handing out christmas baskets to families in need. For the last 10 years... They've helped distribute baskets put together by the empty stocking fund. In the baskets are all the fixin's for a full christmas meal... Bread... Milk... Potatoes... Stuffing... And of course a turkey. They delivered over 60 baskets today to families in our community. We've got some more happy boys and girls as we near christmas... U-s bank.. And cameco resources teamed up to collect gifts for 120 kids at the boys and girls club... (ad-lib) and reason number 285 as to why teachers are great... A flash mob caught on camera at south high school this morning... (((nats up of dancing))) a little gangnam style dancing... For the last day of school before christmas break... Another shooting... This one in pennsylvania as the gunman kills himself after killing three others. And senator john kerry could be the next secretary of state. Those stories and much more tonight... President barack obama addressed the fiscal cliff from the white house press briefing room today he says... This isn't a contest between parties, and called on congress to prevent tax hikes on the middle class. The president said he'd be open to stop gap plans if it means americans won't have a tax hike next month. The president also announced today... He's nominated massachusetts senator... John kerry to be the next secretary of state. He still has to be confirmed by the senate... But is seen as a strong candidate with wide foreign policy experience. If confirmed... He'll replace

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

EPA study seen as soft on fracking
WCTI-TV - Online

12/22/2012

Final results not expected until 2014

NEW YORK (CNNMoney) -

The Environmental Protection Agency released a progress report Friday that reiterated its support for increasing natural gas development in the United States.

"As the administration and EPA has made clear, natural gas has a central role to play in our energy future," the agency said in a press release. "The administration continues to work to expand production of this important domestic resource safely and responsibly."

EPA outlined several steps it's taking to assess the impacts fracking -- short for hydraulic fracturing -- has on the nation's water supply, as directed by Congress in 2009.

Steps include:

-- Analyzing existing data from natural gas companies on chemicals and practices used

-- Modeling how discharging waste might impact the water

-- Lab testing on water discharge

-- Testing fracking chemicals for toxicity

-- Testing groundwater in five regions near drilling activity

The final results are not expected until late 2014.

Some see the lack of data or negative comments in Friday's progress report as a positive for the industry.

"It signals that the Obama administration has no real appetite for additional federal regulations until 2014 at the earliest," said Nitzan Goldberger, a natural gas analyst at Eurasia Group, a political risk consultancy. "That's good news for the oil and gas guys."

The Obama administration has tightened some rules around fracking, but for the most part has left regulation up to the states.

Fracking involves injecting massive amounts of water, sand and some chemicals deep underground in a bid to crack shale rock and ease the flow of oil and natural gas.

The process has unleashed an energy boom in the United States, creating thousands of jobs, driving down the price of oil and natural gas and cutting energy imports to levels not seen in decades.

But it's also raised serious concerns over its effects on the environment, including air pollution from trucks and wells, its

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links to earthquakes and, fears that it is contaminating drinking water.

For environmentalists, the negatives seem to outweigh the positives.

Fracking was once seen as a technology that, given the proper regulations, could be done safely and provide a fuel that emits far fewer greenhouse gases than coal. Natural gas was seen as a good alternative to coal, at least until renewables like wind and solar were ready for prime time.

But declining costs for renewables, more instances of water contamination, uncertainly over the heat-trappng nature of natural gas that escapes from wells unburned, and a fear that cheap gas is crowding out wind and solar have led many to change their minds.

Several environmental groups are calling for an immediate ban on fracking, while others favor a gradual phase out combined with greater federal regulation.

On the other side are many analysts and economists that believe this technology can give the United States a significant economic and geopolitical advantage.

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BLOG: Ohio Utica Shale: Eco-group supports more EPA research on fracking
Akron Beacon Journal, The
Akron, OH
Bob Downing
12/22/2012

Dec. 22--Statement of Bruce Baizel, Earthworks' Oil & Gas Accountability Project Director, on EPA's Progress Report on its study of the potential impacts of hydraulic fracturing on drinking water resources.

Washington, D.C. & Durango, CO -- Earthworks welcomes today's progress report [https://webmail.thebeaconjournal.com/exchweb/bin/redir.asp?URL= http://www.epa.gov/hfstudy/pdfs/hf-report20121214.pdf] on EPA's study of hydraulic fracturing's impacts on drinking water.

It represents a step towards EPA's first real scientific inquiry into the safety of fracking -- a step nearly ten years in the making. EPA's 2004 study of the subject cannot be called science, as it was publicly revealed to be partially written by the very industry it studied.

To date, the only actual science on the subject -- including EPA's own investigations at Pavillion, WY and Duke University's groundwater studies -- suggests impacts and risks.

Most significant about the progress report is the lack of progress it reports. In its inability to find a single company willing to test water quality before and after drilling and fracking, the EPA is being thwarted in perhaps the most important part of its study of fracking's impacts.

We are not surprised, however. Oil and gas companies' unwillingness to cooperate continues a pattern of obstruction of actual science on the impacts of drilling and hydraulic fracturing. Oil and gas developers and their advocates are quick to claim that fracking is safe, but they are unwilling to put their money where their mouth is. Until they do, the industry has no credibility in the debate about the science and safety of fracking.

We look forward to EPA's continued work on a scientific assessment of fracking during the coming year.

More Information:

EPA -- Study of the Potential Impacts of Hydraulic Fracturing on Drinking Water Resources, Progress Report [https://webmail.thebeaconjournal.com/exchweb/bin/redir.asp?URL= http://www.epa.gov/hfstudy/pdfs/hf-report20121214.pdf]

Earthworks -- Hydraulic Fracturing 101 [https://webmail.thebeaconjournal.com/exchweb/bin/redir.asp?URL=http://www.earthworksaction.org/issues/detail/hydraulic_frac turing_101]

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EPA fracking study picks 3 Wise sites
Fort Worth Star-Telegram
Fort Worth, TX
Jim Fuquay
12/22/2012

Sites in Wise County will be among case studies by the Environmental Protection Agency of the impact of hydraulic fracturing on drinking water supplies, the agency said Friday.

The agency began its research last year sparked by concerns that fracturing, or fracking, can contaminate drinking water. It's expected to complete it in 2014.

"The EPA has designed the scope of the research around five stages of the hydraulic fracturing water cycle," the 278-page progress report says. The five areas being studied are large water withdrawals; spills of hydraulic fracturing fluids; injection wells and the fracturing process; spills of flowback and produced water; and the inadequate treatment of wastewater.

The Wise County locations were chosen because of reported complaints over drinking water quality changes. The areas are clustered in three distinct locations -- two near Decatur and one near Alvord.

Reaction to the report, released at midday, was slow to develop.

Bruce Baizel , director of the Oil & Gas Accountability Project for Earthworks, which has been critical of the industry, said the report "represents a step toward EPA's first real scientific inquiry into the safety of fracking -- a step nearly 10 years in the making."

But Sen. Jim Inhofe , R-Okla., a frequent EPA critic, said in a statement that the progress report "is more proof that the administration is not in search of truth, but rather for justification to regulate hydraulic fracturing and cripple the oil and gas industry."

EPA said that as of September, it had data from 24,925 wells fractured between September 2009 and October 2010. It will also use data from FracFocus, an intergovernmental disclosure site of fracturing fluids supported by energy companies.

Also Friday, the EPA finalized rules to reduce air pollution from industrial boilers and incinerators while offering industry more flexibility and lower costs to comply with the new standards. Most of the nation's 1.5 million boilers are too small or emit too little pollution to warrant controls, the administration said.

The changes will require new pollution controls within three years at about 2,300 of the most polluting boilers, including those at refineries and chemical plants. An extra year can be granted to install new pollution controls.

The EPA said it cut the cost of compliance by about $1.5 billion.

Jay Timmons , CEO of the National Association of Manufacturers , said the regulations were "far from being realistic." He accused the EPA of pushing "costly and crippling" rules "when our economy is on the brink."

This report includes material from The Associated Press .

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

Here is the latest Pennsylvania news from The Associated Press
Associated Press (AP) - Harrisburg Bureau

12/22/2012

PITTSBURGH_Total snow accumulation from a winter storm blowing through western Pennsylvania may be smaller than previous estimates. The National Weather Service issued a winter storm warning for parts of western Pennsylvania, while an advisory is in effect for Pittsburgh. Forecasters say Pittsburgh could get one to two inches, while areas to the north and higher elevations could get 4 to 8 inches. The storm warning remains in effect until 7 tonight, but the weather service says little or no accumulation is expected during the day.

GEESEYTOWN, Pa. (AP) _ Authorities say one of a gunman's three victims was a woman fatally shot while decorating for a children's Christmas party at a central Pennsylvania church. Police say the gunman killed two other men at another location. They say the gunman fired at troopers before crashing into a police cruiser. Police then shot him dead.

PITTSBURGH (AP) _ A judge says suspended state Supreme Court Justice Joan Orie Melvin can't avoid a trial just because she's a judge. Melvin's lawyers say she shouldn't face criminal prosecution for alleged campaign corruption charges because the judiciary should handle such complaints. But Judge Lester Nauhaus denied that request yesterday. The 56-year-old Pittsburgh-area jurist is scheduled for trial next month on charges that she illegally used her state-paid staff to run her election campaigns.

WASHINGTON (AP) _ The Environmental Protection Agency has released a progress report on its research into potential impacts of natural gas hydraulic fracturing and drilling on drinking water. The update doesn't come to any conclusions and the final report won't be released until 2014. The EPA says information on fracking chemicals has been collected from nine companies and nearly 25,000 wells. Computer analysis is also being done on well construction.

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

Latest Pennsylvania news, sports, business and entertainment
Associated Press (AP) - Harrisburg Bureau

12/22/2012

RURAL ROAD SHOOTING

Woman decorating church 1 of 3 Pa. slaying victims

GEESEYTOWN, Pa. (AP) _ Authorities say one of a gunman's three victims was a woman fatally shot while decorating for a children's Christmas party at a central Pennsylvania church.

The Rev. James McCaulley says the woman was killed Friday by a man who first fired shots through the windows of the Juniata Valley Gospel Church hall in Frankstown Township. That's about 70 miles west of Harrisburg. Another woman decorating wasn't shot.

Police say the gunman killed two other men at another location before he was fatally shot by state troopers.

Police have yet to release names of the victims or the gunman. They say the gunman fired at troopers before crashing into a police cruiser. Police then shot him.

WINTER STORM-PA

Storm may bring less snow to western Pa.

PITTSBURGH (AP) _ Snow began to fall Friday afternoon across western Pennsylvania, but the total accumulation may be smaller than previous estimates.

The National Weather Service issued a winter storm warning for parts of western Pennsylvania, while an advisory is in effect for Pittsburgh. Forecasters say Pittsburgh could get one to two inches overnight, while areas to the north and higher elevations could get 4 to 8 inches.

The storm warning remains in effect until 7 p.m. Saturday, but the weather service says little or no accumulation is expected during the day.

On Friday afternoon the weather service issued a flood warning for the Philadelphia area, and strong winds are expected on Saturday.

Heavy rain also trigged small stream flood warnings in eastern Pennsylvania, where high winds also brought down some trees.

PENNSYLVANIA JUDGE-CORRUPTION

Judge says Melvin isn't above criminal charges

PITTSBURGH (AP) _ A judge says suspended state Supreme Court Justice Joan Orie Melvin can't avoid a trial just because she's a judge.

Melvin's lawyers say she shouldn't face criminal prosecution for alleged campaign corruption charges because the

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

judiciary should handle such complaints. But on Friday Judge Lester Nauhaus denied that request.

Melvin's lawyers also want prospective jurors to be asked about any media reports they've seen before she goes on trial. Nauhaus has not ruled on that motion.

Such motions are commonplace in higher-profile cases like Melvin's.

The 56-year-old Pittsburgh-area jurist is scheduled for trial Jan. 23 on charges that she illegally used her state-paid staff to run her election campaigns for the state's highest court when she was a judge on the Superior Court, a lower appellate court.

METAL PLANT FIRE

Fire burning at metal plant in western Pa.

MOUNT PLEASANT, Pa. (AP) _ A fire is burning at a metal plant in western Pennsylvania.

A spokesman for Westmoreland County Emergency Management says the fire at EHC Industries Inc. in Mount Pleasant is being fueled by chemicals and propane tanks. The spokesman, Dan Stevens, says the fire ignited paint thinner and oxygen and propane tanks, which have been exploding.

There's no word on whether anyone has been injured.

Stevens says firefighters and hazardous materials crews responded to the building around 4 p.m. Friday and it was already consumed by heavy fire. He says part of the 32,000-square-foot building has collapsed. The Pittsburgh Tribune-Review reports that flames are shooting through the roof and thick smoke is obscuring visibility.

PENN STATE-ABUSE

Penn State settlement talks to resume in January

STATE COLLEGE, Pa. (AP) _ Penn State says settlement talks with lawyers for young men who were molested by Jerry Sandusky will resume next month.

The university posted an update on the talks Friday afternoon. President Rodney Erickson says Penn State is "pleased with the progress so far."

Penn State has said it wants to settle privately and avoid protracted litigation. The university is represented by Kenneth Feinberg, who ran victim compensation funds for victims of Agent Orange, the Sept. 11 attacks, the Virginia Tech massacre and the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

Sandusky was sentenced to at least 30 years in prison following his conviction on charges that he molested 10 boys over 15 years. The former Penn State assistant football coach has maintained his innocence.

EPA-FRACKING STUDY

EPA releases progress report on fracking study

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

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Online: http://www.epa.gov/hfstudy/

POLITICAL T-SHIRT FLAP

Philly teen sues school over Romney T-shirt flap

(Information in the following story is from: The Philadelphia Inquirer, http://www.philly.com)

PHILADELPHIA (AP) _ The family of a Philadelphia teenager who says she was mocked by her geometry teacher for wearing a Mitt Romney T-shirt to class has sued the teacher and the school district.

The Philadelphia Inquirer reports the lawsuit claims the district ignored 16-year-old Samantha Pawlucy's right to free speech.

The lawsuit claims the district let other students harass Pawlucy and subjected her to emotional distress. It seeks unspecified damages.

A district spokesman won't comment.

Teacher Lynette Gaymon has apologized to Pawlucy. A telephone message left Friday for Gaymon hasn't been returned.

Pawlucy says the teacher questioned why she was wearing the shirt and called others to the room to laugh at her in September.

Romney called the girl's family and said he appreciated her courage. The Republican lost Pennsylvania and the November election to President Barack Obama.

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

Latest West Virginia news, sports, business and entertainment
Associated Press (AP) - Charleston, WV Bureau

12/22/2012

PIPELINE EXPLOSION

US agency seeks immediate action on W.Va. pipeline

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) _ Federal regulators are ordering an immediate inspection and necessary repairs to a natural gas pipeline that was the source of a spectacular explosion Dec. 11 near Sissonville.

The order was by the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration. It warns that the continued use of the pipeline without corrective measures would be hazardous to life and property and an environmental threat.

The 26.2-mile natural gas transmission ruptured 10 days ago about 15 miles outside of Charleston, destroying four homes and scorching an 800-foot section of Interstate 77. There were no serious injuries.

A spokesman for Columbia Gas Transmission did not immediately return a telephone message from The Associated Press.

The National Transportation Safety Board has not determined the cause of the explosion.

EPA-FRACKING STUDY

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CSX LAWSUIT

W.Va. doctor, Penn. lawyers guilty of racketeering

WHEELING, W.Va. (AP) _ A federal jury has found a West Virginia radiologist and two Pittsburgh attorneys guilty of conspiring to fabricate asbestos claims.

The Wheeling jury on Thursday ordered attorneys Robert Peirce and Louis Raimond and radiologist Ray Harron to pay

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CSX Transportation more than $429,000, which could be tripled because they were convicted of civil racketeering charges.

Harron diagnosed tens of thousands of asbestos claims for the attorneys. In 2007, he agreed to stop practicing in Texas, where he was under investigation by that state's Medical Board for thousands of questionable diagnoses of the lung disease silicosis.

CSX sued in 2005, claiming Kentucky railroad worker Earl Baylor was fraudulently diagnosed with asbestosis. The case was briefly thrown out before being reinstated by a Virginia federal appeals court.

The trial began Dec. 11.

JUVENILE CORRECTIONS

Judge: W.Va. lawmakers must fix problems at Salem

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) _ A judge says the Industrial Home for Youth at Salem is violating the rights of young offenders, and he's ordering West Virginia's executive and legislative branches to make some serious changes in 2013.

Kanawha County Circuit Judge Omar Aboulhosn said Friday that if they fail to address the problems experts identified, he won't hesitate to step in. That could mean ordering the removal of the residents.

An expert witness who testified in lawsuits filed over the facility has recommended its closure, saying it's too prison-like for children and young adults.

The judge agrees, ruling that Salem follows a reform-school model with harsh tactics that harden the offenders' attitudes and lead to higher recidivism.

He also ordered state officials to begin individual assessments to determine whether any juveniles should be transferred.

POULTRY FARM RUNOFF

EPA drops water pollution orders for W.Va. farmer

MORGANTOWN, W.Va. (AP) _ The Environmental Protection Agency has withdrawn a violation order and fines it threatened to levy against a West Virginia chicken farmer who sued the agency over new rules aimed at cleaning up the Chesapeake Bay.

Attorney David Yaussy confirmed Friday that EPA recently withdrew its order against Eight Is Enough operator Lois Alt after reviewing what he called minor changes to her Hardy County operation.

Yaussy says Alt is thrilled she no longer faces fines of $37,500 a day, but it's unclear what will happen to her lawsuit.

EPA officials didn't immediately say whether they will move to dismiss the case.

But Yaussy and the West Virginia Farm Bureau say the issues underlying Alt's case still must be addressed by a federal court because they could affect chicken farmers nationwide.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

W.Va. health care group gets federal funding

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) _ The West Virginia Primary Care Association is getting $475,000 in federal funding from the health reform law.

Sen. Jay Rockefeller said Friday that the Charleston group will use the funds to connect existing electronic health records to help health centers across the state improve clinical care.

Officials say the funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services also will help the group collect data to help identify areas for improvement in clinical care and training.

The association is comprised of 30 organizational members with more than 160 clinical sites that collectively provide care for nearly 30 percent of West Virginia's population.

UNEMPLOYMENT-COUNTIES

Jobless rates rise in 29 W.Va. counties in Nov.

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) _ Unemployment rates rose in 29 of West Virginia's 55 counties in November

WorkForce West Virginia said Friday that 22 counties reported jobless rate decreases, while rates were unchanged in six counties.

Monongalia County has the lowest rate in the state at 4.3 percent. Clay County's 14.1 percent rate is the highest.

West Virginia's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 7.3 percent, down two-tenths of a percentage point from October's rate.

PET VACCINATIONS

W.Va. ag officials urge pet vaccinations

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) _ West Virginia agriculture officials are urging pet owners to make sure vaccinations are up-to-date for all of their animals.

The advice follows news that the Kanawha County animal shelter will close its doors for three weeks to decontaminate the premises.

Officials say canine and feline distemper were discovered in the shelter. While the diseases don't affect humans, it can be fatal to pets.

Agriculture Commissioner Gus Douglass says that the diseases are preventable with a vaccination.

State law requires that dogs and cats be vaccinated against rabies every three years. Vaccinations for distemper, hepatitis, leptospirosis, parvo, parainfluenza and coronavirus are recommended.

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

Latest Wyoming news, sports, business and entertainment
Associated Press (AP) - Cheyenne Bureau

12/22/2012

DOOMSDAY-YELLOWSTONE

No Mayan doom in Yellowstone, science continues

CHEYENNE, Wyo. (AP) _ The ancient Mayan calendar has ended without global doom including an eruption of the massive volcano beneath Yellowstone National Park.

That's what happened in a 2009 apocalypse movie called "2012," but if anything Yellowstone's geology has been unusually quiet lately.

Scientists say they are learning more than ever about the Yellowstone volcano. The volcano has had three epic eruptions in the past 2 million years but geologists say there is no strong evidence of any lava flows in the past 70,000 years.

Bob Smith with the Yellowstone Volcano Observatory says a recent upgrade to monitoring equipment should allow scientists to gain a better understanding of what's going on deep beneath Yellowstone.

That includes the ability to tell which small earthquakes are caused by magma flowing deep beneath the ground.

STUDENT-GUN

Casper teen suspended for bringing gun to school

(Information in the following story is from: Casper (Wyo.) Star-Tribune, http://www.trib.com)

CASPER, Wyo. (AP) _ A Casper teen has been suspended for bringing a loaded handgun to school.

The unidentified student brought the gun to Kelly Walsh High School Thursday but didn't threaten anyone. Students told a faculty member at 7:45 a.m. and staffers found the student and the gun soon afterward.

The incident came less than a week after the Connecticut school shooting.

Sgt. Deahn Amend told the Casper Star-Tribune that the student thought it would be "cool" to take the weapon to school.

Principal Brad Diller said he couldn't recall anyone else every bringing a gun to the school but said there had been cases of hunting rifles left in vehicles.

The student is suspended for 10 days and the school board will consider whether he should be expelled. He was also cited by police.

WYOMING ABDUCTION

Speer enters not guilty pleas in Cody abduction

(Information in the following story is from: Powell (Wyo.) Tribune, http://www.powelltribune.com)

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

CODY, Wyo. (AP) _ A Montana man charged with kidnapping and sexually assaulting an 11-year-old Cody girl has pleaded not guilty.

Jesse P. Speer appeared Friday before District Judge Steven Cranfill in Cody.

The Powell Tribune reports Speer only answered routine questions, responding that he understood his constitutional rights.

Speer's court-appointed attorney, Travis Smith of Cody, entered not guilty pleas to three felony charges for Speer.

Cranfill didn't set a trial date Friday. Speer has a right to be tried within 180 days.

Authorities charge that Speer, of Belgrade, Mont., abducted the girl in Cody in early October. They say he sexually assaulted her before releasing her. Hunters later found her and took her to safety.

Court records filed in Montana say Speer told arresting officers he abducted and assaulted the girl.

SUPERINTENDENT SALARIES

AP analysis: School superintendents outearn gov

CHEYENNE, Wyo. (AP) _ An analysis reveals that public school superintendents in Wyoming earn an average salary of about $130,000 a year _ well above the amount paid to the governor.

The Associated Press review also shows Wyoming school chiefs make about $22,000 a year more than the average earned by Colorado superintendents.

Nationally, public school superintendents were paid an average of about $156,000 in 2008-09.

Wyoming is undertaking an ambitious public education reform initiative focused on improving academic achievement rather than on how the state is spending some $1 billion a year on K-12 education.

Dan Stephan, of the Wyoming Association of School Administrators, says the salaries of all Wyoming educators have increased, and local school boards understand how good leadership relates to student achievement.

Wyoming Gov. Matt Mead is paid $105,000.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

Wyoming observes moment of silence for CT shooting

CHEYENNE, Wyo. (AP) _ Wyoming observed a moment of silence and remembrance Friday to honor the victims of last week's shooting rampage at Sandy Hook Elementary School.

St. Mary's Cathedral in Cheyenne and other places of worship rang their bells 26 times in honor of the victims.

Gov. Matt Mead and governors across the country called on citizens to observe the moment of silence at 9:30 a.m. in local time zones _ the hour of the shooting last week in Connecticut.

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

WYOMING RANGE DRILLING

$750K needed to seal Wyo. Range gas lease buyout; fundraiser being held in Jackson Friday

CHEYENNE, Wyo. (AP) _ A land conservation hoping to retire gas leases in the Hoback River headwaters is holding a fundraiser in Jackson.

Friday's event will feature a raffle with prizes that include a guitar signed by Johnny Depp, a 15-day ski pass at Jackson Hole Mountain Resort and guided fishing trips.

Country musician Jalan Crossland, a Wyoming native and self-described "trailer park troubadour", will also play.

Few Wyoming environmental issues have attracted as much attention within the state as the possibility of oil and gas drilling in the Wyoming Range, a scenic and mostly untrammeled region between Jackson and Kemmerer that is popular with hunters and fishermen.

The Trust for Public Land announced in early October that it had agreed with Plains Exploration and Production to buy out its leases for $8.75 million. The group needs to raise $750,000 by New Year's.

TD Ameritrade founder Joe Ricketts is giving $1 million to the cause.

FOREST MERGER

Teton Co. commissioners oppose forest merger

(Information in the following story is from: Jackson Hole (Wyo.) News And Guide, http://www.jhnewsandguide.com)

JACKSON, Wyo. (AP) _ The Teton County commissioners and the Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance are joining those concerned about the possible merger of Bridger-Teton and Caribou-Targhee national forests.

Commissioners and alliance members met Thursday in Jackson to discuss the U.S. Forest Service's plan to study the cost-cutting idea.

The alliance's executive director, Trevor Stevenson, told the Jackson Hole Daily that merging the two sprawling forests is a bad idea and studying it is a waste of money. He thinks it could be an excuse to move the supervisor's office away from Jackson.

The commissioners sent a letter to regional forester Harv Forsgren asking him not to pursue a merger.

Forsgren is set to retire Jan. 5. and his replacement hasn't been announced. A decision on the merger is expected by the end of January.

EPA-FRACKING STUDY

EPA releases progress report on fracking study

WASHINGTON (AP) _ The Environmental Protection Agency has released a progress report on its research into potential impacts of natural gas hydraulic fracturing and drilling on drinking water.

The update released Friday doesn't come to any conclusions and the final report won't be released until 2014.

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

The EPA says information on fracking chemicals has been collected from nine companies and 24,925 wells. Computer analysis is also being done on well construction.

The EPA says it is working with scientists, the industry, and environmental groups to examine any possible impacts. Sampling at five locations in Colorado, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, and Texas has been completed, and lab studies are being done on drilling wastewater.

The industry and many states say the process is safe when done properly, but critics dispute that.

ELECTRIC CO-OPS-RATES

NM regulators put co-op rate increase on hold

(Information in the following story is from: The Santa Fe New Mexican, http://www.sfnewmexican.com)

SANTA FE, N.M. (AP) _ New Mexico regulators have put on hold a rate increase for a dozen electric cooperatives that are part of the Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association.

The Santa Fe New Mexican reports that the Public Regulation Commission made its decision Thursday and ordered a hearing.

The commissioners expect a court battle since Tri-State has argued that the commission has no jurisdiction over interstate wholesale power sales.

A Tri-State spokesman says the PRC decision will have a negative effect on the utility's members in New Mexico, Colorado, Nebraska and Wyoming.

Colorado-based Tri-State sells power to 44 electric cooperatives in the four states. It set a 4.9 percent rate increase to take effect on Jan. 1, 2013.

Three New Mexico co-ops protested.

The commission appointed a mediator in November, but the negotiations between Tri-State and the three co-ops failed.

PIPELINE REMOVAL

Big Horn River could close for pipeline removal

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) _ Phillips 66 is removing an oil pipeline from beneath a popular Montana river after the line had to be abandoned because it was nearly exposed by erosion.

Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks said Friday that a heavily-fished section of the Bighorn River southeast of Billings could be closed for two days if necessary in early January while the 8-inch pipeline is removed.

Agency spokesman Bob Gibson says the timing was coordinated with fly-fishing groups to minimize disruption.

Gibson says agency biologists witnessed the pipeline exposed during periods of high water. He says it's now under an estimated 3 feet to 5 feet of gravel.

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 22 to 27

An Exxon Mobil pipeline broke last year beneath the Yellowstone River near Laurel, spilling an estimated 63,000 barrels of crude that contaminated 70 miles of riverbank.

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