

REGULATORY STATEMENTS ON HYDRAULIC FRACTURING
SUBMITTED BY THE STATES
JUNE 2009

The following statements were issued by state regulators for the record related to hydraulic fracturing in their states. Statements have been compiled for this document.

ALABAMA:

Nick Tew, Ph.D., P.G.
Alabama State Geologist & Oil and Gas Supervisor
President, Association of American State Geologists

There have been no documented cases of drinking water contamination that have resulted from hydraulic fracturing operations to stimulate oil and gas wells in the State of Alabama.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approved the State Oil and Gas Board of Alabama's (Board) Class II Underground Injection Control (UIC) Program in August 1982, pursuant to Section 1425 of the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA). This approval was made after EPA determined that the Board's program accomplished the objectives of the SDWA, that is, the protection of underground sources of drinking water. Obtaining primacy for the Class II UIC Program, however, was not the beginning of the Board's ground-water protection programs. These programs, which include the regulation and approval of hydraulic fracturing operations, have been continuously and actively implemented since the Board was established in 1945, pursuant to its mission and legislative mandates.

The State of Alabama, acting through the Board, has a vested interest in protecting its drinking water sources and has adequate rules and regulations, as well as statutory mandates, to protect these sources from all oil and gas operations, including hydraulic fracturing. The fact that there has been no documented case of contamination from these operations, including hydraulic fracturing, is strong evidence of effective regulation of the industry by the Board. In our view, additional federal regulations will not provide any greater level of protection for our drinking water sources than is currently being provided.

ALASKA:

Cathy Foerster
Commissioner
Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission

There have been no verified cases of harm to ground water in the State of Alaska as a result of hydraulic fracturing.

State regulations already exist in Alaska to protect fresh water sources. Current well construction standards used in Alaska (as required by Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission statutes

and regulations) properly protect fresh drinking waters. Surface casing is always set well below fresh waters and cemented to surface. This includes both injectors and producers as the casing/cementing programs are essentially the same in both types of wells. There are additional casings installed in wells as well as tubing which ultimately connects the reservoir to the surface. The AOGCC requires rigorous testing to demonstrate the effectiveness of these barriers protecting fresh water sources.

By passing this legislation [FRAC Act] it is probable that every oil and gas well within the State of Alaska will come under EPA jurisdiction. EPA will then likely set redundant construction guidelines and testing standards that will merely create duplicate reporting and testing requirements with no benefit to the environment. Additional government employees will be required to monitor the programs, causing further waste of taxpayer dollars.

Material safety data sheets for all materials used in oil and gas operations are required to be maintained on location by Hazard Communication Standards of OSHA. Therefore, requiring such data in the FRAC bill is, again, merely duplicate effort with and accomplishes nothing new.

COLORADO:

David Neslin
Director
Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission

To the knowledge of the Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission staff, there has been no verified instance of harm to groundwater caused by hydraulic fracturing in Colorado.

INDIANA:

Herschel McDivitt
Director
Indiana Department of Natural Resources

There have been no instances where the Division of Oil and Gas has verified that harm to groundwater has ever been found to be the result of hydraulic fracturing in Indiana. In fact, we are unaware of any allegations that hydraulic fracturing may be the cause of or may have been a contributing factor to an adverse impact to groundwater in Indiana.

The Division of Oil and Gas is the sole agency responsible for overseeing all aspects of oil and gas production operations as directed under Indiana's Oil and Gas Act. Additionally, the Division of Oil and Gas has been granted primacy by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, to implement the Underground Injection Control (UIC) Program for Class II wells in Indiana under the Safe Drinking Water Act.

KENTUCKY:

Kim Collings, EEC
Director
Kentucky Division of Oil and Gas

In Kentucky, there have been alleged contaminations from citizen complaints but nothing that can be substantiated, in every case the well had surface casing cemented to surface and production casing cemented.

LOUISIANA:

James Welsh
Commissioner of Conservation
Louisiana Department of Natural Resources

The Louisiana Office of Conservation is unaware of any instance of harm to groundwater in the State of Louisiana caused by the practice of hydraulic fracturing. My office is statutorily responsible for regulation of the oil and gas industry in Louisiana, including completion technology such as hydraulic fracturing, underground injection and disposal of oilfield waste operations, and management of the major aquifers in the State of Louisiana.

MICHIGAN:

Harold Fitch
Director, Office of Geological Survey
Department of Environmental Quality

My agency, the Office of Geological Survey (OGS) of the Department of Environmental Quality, regulates oil and gas exploration and production in Michigan. The OGS issues permits for oil and gas wells and monitors all aspects of well drilling, completion, production, and plugging operations, including hydraulic fracturing.

Hydraulic fracturing has been utilized extensively for many years in Michigan, in both deep formations and in the relatively shallow Antrim Shale formation. There are about 9,900 Antrim wells in Michigan producing natural gas at depths of 500 to 2000 feet. Hydraulic fracturing has been used in virtually every Antrim well.

There is no indication that hydraulic fracturing has ever caused damage to ground water or other resources in Michigan. In fact, the OGS has never received a complaint or allegation that hydraulic fracturing has impacted groundwater in any way.

OKLAHOMA:

Lori Wrotenbery
Director, Oil and Gas Conservation Division
Oklahoma Corporation Commission

You asked whether there has been a verified instance of harm to groundwater in our state from the practice of hydraulic fracturing. The answer is no. We have no documentation of such an instance. Furthermore, I have consulted the senior staffs of our Pollution Abatement Department, Field Operations Department, and Technical Services Department, and they have no recollection of having ever received a report, complaint, or allegation of such an instance. We also contacted the senior staffs of the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality, who likewise, have no such knowledge or information.

While there have been incidents of groundwater contamination associated with oil and gas drilling and production operations in the State of Oklahoma, none of the documented incidents have been associated with hydraulic fracturing. Our agency has been regulating oil and gas drilling and production operations in the state for over 90 years. Tens of thousands of hydraulic fracturing operations have been conducted in the state in the last 60 years. Had hydraulic fracturing caused harm to groundwater in our state in anything other than a rare and isolated instance, we are confident that we would have identified that harm in the course of our surveillance of drilling and production practices and our investigation of groundwater contamination incidents.

TENNESSEE:

Paul Schmierbach
Manager
Tennessee Department of Environmental Conservation

We have had no reports of well damage due to fracking.

TEXAS:

Victor G. Carrillo
Chairman
Railroad Commission of Texas

The practice of reservoir stimulation by hydraulic fracturing has been used safely in Texas for over six decades in tens of thousands of wells across the state.

Recently in his introductory Statement for the Record (June 9, 2009) of the Fracturing Responsibility and Awareness of Chemicals (FRAC) Act, Senator Robert Casey stated:

“Now, the oil and gas industry would have you believe that there is no threat to drinking water from hydraulic fracturing. But the fact is we are already seeing cases in Pennsylvania, Colorado, Virginia, West Virginia, Alabama, Wyoming, Ohio, Arkansas, Utah, Texas, and New Mexico where residents have become ill or groundwater has become contaminated after hydraulic fracturing operations began in the area.”

This statement perpetuates the misconception that there are many surface or groundwater contamination cases in Texas and other states due to hydraulic fracturing. This is not true and here are the facts: Though hydraulic fracturing has been used for over 60 years in Texas, our Railroad Commission records ***do not reflect a single documented surface or groundwater contamination case associated with hydraulic fracturing.***

Hydraulic fracturing plays a key role in the development of unconventional gas resources in Texas. As of this year, over 11,000 gas wells have been completed - and hydraulically fractured - in the Newark East (Barnett Shale) Field, one of the nation's largest and most active natural gas fields. Since 2000, over 5 Tcf (trillion cubic feet) of gas has been produced from this one reservoir and Barnett Shale production currently contributes over 20% of total Texas natural gas production (over 7 Tcf in 2008 – more than a third of total U.S. marketed production). While the volume of gas-in-place in the Barnett Shale is estimated to be over 27 Tcf, conventional recovery of the gas is difficult because of the shale's low permeability. The remarkable success of the Barnett Shale results in large part from the use of horizontal drilling coupled with hydraulic fracturing. Even with this intense activity, there are no known instances of ongoing surface or groundwater contamination in the Barnett Shale play.

Regulating oil and gas exploration and production activities, including hydraulic fracturing, has traditionally been the province of the states, which have had effective programs in place for decades. Regulating hydraulic fracturing as underground injection under the federal Safe Drinking Water Act would impose significant additional costs and regulatory burdens and could ultimately reverse the significant U.S. domestic unconventional gas reserve additions of recent years – substantially harming domestic energy security. Congress should maintain the status quo and let the states continue to responsibly regulate oil and gas activities, including hydraulic fracturing.

In summary, I am aware of no verified instance of harm to groundwater in Texas from the decades long practice of hydraulic fracturing.

SOUTH DAKOTA:

Fred Steece
Oil and Gas Supervisor
Department of Environment and Natural Resource

Oil and gas wells have been hydraulically fractured, "fracked," in South Dakota since oil was discovered in 1954 and since gas was discovered in 1970. South Dakota has had rules in place, dating back to the 1940's, that require sufficient surface casing and cement to be installed in

wells to protect ground water supplies in the state's oil fields. Producing wells are required to have production casing and cement, and tubing with packers installed. The casing, tubing, and cement are all designed to protect drinking waters of the state as well as to prevent commingling of water and oil and gas in the subsurface. In the 41 years that I have supervised oil and gas exploration, production and development in South Dakota, no documented case of water well or aquifer damage by the fracking of oil or gas wells, has been brought to my attention. Nor am I aware of any such cases before my time.

WYOMING:

Rick Marvel
Engineering Manager
Wyoming Oil and Gas Conservation Commission

Tom Doll
Oil and Gas Commission Supervisor
Wyoming Oil and Gas Conservation Commission

- No documented cases of groundwater contamination from fracture stimulations in Wyoming.
- No documented cases of groundwater contamination from UIC regulated wells in Wyoming.
- Wyoming took primacy over UIC Class II wells in 1982, currently 4,920 Class II wells permitted.

Wyoming's 2008 activity:

- Powder River Basin Coalbed Wells – 1,699 new wells, no fracture stimulation.
- Rawlins Area (deeper) Coalbed Wells – 109 new wells, 100% fracture stimulated.
- Statewide Conventional Gas Wells – 1,316 new wells, 100% fracture stimulated – many wells with multi-zone fracture stimulations in each well bore, some staged and some individual fracture stimulations.
- Statewide Oil Wells – 237 new wells, 75% fracture stimulated.

The Wyoming Oil and Gas Commission Rules and Regulations are specific in requiring the operator receive approval prior to performing hydraulic fracturing treatments. The Rules require the operator to provide detailed information regarding the hydraulic fracturing process, to include the source of water and/or trade name fluids, type of proppants, as well as estimated pump pressures. After the treatment is complete the operator is required to provide actual fracturing data in detail and resulting production results.

Under Chapter 3, Section 8 (c) The Application for Permit to Drill or Deepen (Form 1) states..."information shall also be given relative to the drilling plan, together with any other information which may be required by the Supervisor. Where multiple Applications for Permit

to Drill will be sought for several wells proposed to be drilled to the same zone within an area of geologic similarity, approval may be sought from the Supervisor to file a comprehensive drilling plan containing the information required above which will then be referenced on each Application for Permit to Drill.” Operators have been informed by Commission staff to include detailed information regarding the hydraulic fraction stimulation process on the Form 1 Application for Permit to Drill.

The Rules also state, in Chapter 3, Section 1 (a) “A written notice of intention to do work or to change plans previously approved on the original APD and/or drilling and completion plan (Chapter 3, Section 8 (c)) must be filed with the Supervisor on the Sundry Notice (Form 4), unless otherwise directed, and must reach the Supervisor and receive his approval before the work is begun. Approval must be sought to acidize, cleanout, flush, fracture, or stimulate a well. The Sundry Notice must include depth to perforations or the openhole interval, the source of water and/or trade name fluids, type proponents, as well as estimated pump pressures. Routine activities that do not affect the integrity of the wellbore or the reservoir, such as pump replacements, do not require a Sundry Notice. The Supervisor may require additional information.” Most operators will submit the Sundry Notice Form 4 to provide the specific detail for the hydraulic fracturing treatment even though the general information might have been provided under the Form 1 Application for Permit to Drill.

After the hydraulic fracture treatment is complete, results must be reported to the Supervisor. Chapter 3, Section 12 Well Completion or Recompletion Report and Log (Form 3) state “upon completion or recompletion of a well, stratigraphic test or core hole, or the completion of any remedial work such as plugging back or drilling deeper, acidizing, shooting, formation fracturing, squeezing operations, setting a liner, gun perforating, or other similar operations not specifically covered herein, a report on the operation shall be filed with the Supervisor. Such report shall present a detailed account of the work done and the manner in which such work was performed; the daily production of the oil, gas, and water both prior to and after the operation; the size and depth of perforations; the quantity of sand, crude, chemical, or other materials employed in the operation and any other pertinent information of operations which affect the original status of the well and are not specifically covered herein.”