



Information letter for those to whom fracking matters and updates on the website FFI

Thanks to all for your contribution

contact: ineke@frackingfreeireland.org

visit: www.frackingfreeireland.org

The worst illiterate is the political illiterate. He hears nothing, sees nothing, takes no part in political life. He doesn't seem to know that the cost of living, the price of beans, of flour, of rent, of medicines, all depend on political decisions. He even prides himself on his political ignorance, sticks out his chest and says he hates politics. He doesn't know, the imbecile, that from his political non-participation comes the prostitute, the abandoned child, the robber and, worst of all, corrupt officials, the lackeys of exploitative multinational corporations.
~ Bertolt Brecht





"Jim Dillon from Kiltyclogher speaks about why he is against fracking. This short piece was filmed by Gearoid Lynch (No Fracking Ireland) and a South African film crew

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TwasQTcB87Q&feature=share>

(see also movies)

EVENTS and other small CAMPAIGN news

Upcoming EPA National Water Event 2012 to be held in Galway on the 13th and 14th of June 2012.

For further information on the event please see:

<https://www.eventelephant.com/epanationalwaterevent2012>

KEEP IN TOUCH

NO FRACKING IRELAND

Our facebook page that is presently acting as the most popular ant-fracking page in Ireland at the moment for sharing news/info. There are presently nearly 3,700 members on the page. link - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/146055765467930/> NO FRACKING IRELAND (all caps)

FRACKING IRELAND GOOGLE GROUPS: fracking-ireland@googlegroups.com

contact: Charlie Williams charlie2williams@gmail.com

and more, visit <http://frackingfreeireland.org/websiteblogs/ireland/> for a full list of website and face book pages.

WHAT YOU CAN/MUST DO

SIGN EU PETITION - Food and Water Watch, Europe I

[http://action.foodandwaterwatch.org/p/dia/action/public/?](http://action.foodandwaterwatch.org/p/dia/action/public/?action_KEY=10270&track=5412europe)

[action_KEY=10270&track=5412europe](http://action.foodandwaterwatch.org/p/dia/action/public/?action_KEY=10270&track=5412europe)

to Mr. Janez Potocnik - European Commissioner for the Environment

Mr. Guenther Oettinger - European Commissioner for Energy

Help us stop fracking in Europe before the damage is done!

The European Commission is taking a wait-and-see approach on the use of hydraulic fracking and shale gas, which will allow the shale gas industry to continue exploring and to start extracting shale gas.

Please tell the European Commission that you don't want this extreme source of high-carbon energy, shale gas, to be developed in the EU. The European Commissioners should be protecting Europe's water resources and pushing for a zero-carbon energy mix for the EU.

Please fill out the form below and edit the letter as you wish. Your message will be sent directly to the Commissioners and officials listed below.

Geert Decock

Policy Officer - Food & Water Europe

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Mobile: [+32 \(0\)484 629 491](tel:+322484629491)

Email: gdecock@fweurope.org

Website: <http://www.foodandwaterwatch.org/europe>

Hello All,

On behalf of Food and Water Watch, Europe I just took action to stop fracking in Europe. Will you take action too?

Fracking, short for hydraulic fracturing, is a type of gas drilling that injects millions of liters of hydraulic fluids — a mixture of chemicals, water and sand — into a well to create pressure that cracks open rock underground, releasing natural gas. This process can deplete and contaminate local water supplies, damage the environment and threaten public health due to the wide range of chemicals used. In addition, shale gas extraction has a large carbon footprint (even comparable to coal) and will likely slow down the large-scale deployment of renewable energy sources and reduce incentives for energy efficiency measures.

Although the industry is fighting against public outcry to end fracking in the United States, companies involved in shale gas extraction are looking to export this extreme technique of energy extraction around the world – and to Europe in particular. Shale gas projects are surging ahead in EU Member States like Poland, the United Kingdom and Ireland, whereas other countries such as France, Bulgaria and a number of German states have banned fracking.

Will you send an email to the European Commissioners on Energy and the Environment urging them to stop fracking in the EU?

Take action here:

http://action.foodandwaterwatch.org/p/dia/action/public/?action_KEY=1027

Thank you.
Susan



Reporter: David Taylor

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/05/21/fracking-new-york-farmers-gas-drilling_n_1532618.html

Pennsylvania dairy farmers Carol French and Carolyn Knapp travel to other shale gas states giving talks on gas drilling. They tell of methane-contaminated wells; contractors destroying valuable timber for access roads; pipelines making cropland inaccessible; years of agricultural production lost and uncompensated; road damage that isolates families for weeks.

"I never in my wildest dreams envisioned the industrialization that comes along with this process," Knapp told an audience in Pittsboro, N.C.

Interestingly, there's a reference to an organic farmer in New York, Siobhan Griffin. Now there's a name!

Also:

The Park Slope Food Cooperative, which buys upward of \$3 million worth of products from upstate farms, has **told farmers its members won't buy products from any area that allows fracking**, because they fear contamination.

The very point of "Keeping Ireland Fracking Free" and one worth emphasizing.



IRISH NEWS

No 'fracking' until further study, says Rabbitte

<http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/ireland/2012/0512/1224315982310.html> (12 May 2012)

Ireland: Fracking Requires Additional Study <http://www.naturalgaseurope.com/ireland-shale-gas-fracking-report>

Controversial fracking firm has multi-million community 'war chest'

<http://www.independent.ie/national-news/controversial-fracking-firm-has-multimillion-community-war-chest-3104664.html>

(...) Tamboran, the Australian-Canadian consortium hoping to erect a network of gas 'fracking' drill sites in Co Leitrim, is putting in place a €2m-a-year community investment fund, the [Irish Independent](#) has learned. (...)

(...) Unlike pre-planning donations, community contributions are frequently set down in rulings by [An Bord Pleanála](#), and administered by the relevant local authorities in conjunction with community groups. Unlike pre-planning donations, community contributions are frequently set down in rulings by [An Bord Pleanála](#), and administered by the relevant local authorities in conjunction with community groups.

For example, Indaver is paying €250,000 for community facilities around the village of Carranstown, Co Meath, where its incinerator is located.

Shell has also agreed to pay €8.5m for community projects over a five-year period in the Belmullet area as a condition of its planning permission to build the Corrib gas pipeline.

Fracking study delivers mixed conclusions on environmental impact

<http://www.rte.ie/news/2012/0511/fracking-study.html>

(...) Good Energies Alliance, which has been campaigning against fracking, says that the report does not even scratch the surface of the studies needed about the process and it says far more work, studies and investigations will have to be done.

It said the Government must make full resources available to the EPA to carry out complete studies.

It also said there should be a moratorium on further licences at least until enough time is made available to allow consideration of EU, US and Canadian experiences, reports and recommendation.

Dr Aedin McLoughlin of Good Energies Alliance said there would not be a "low and probably manageable risk to groundwater from fracking" as concluded by Dr Healy's report because of Ireland's unique geology and the depth of the wells that would be drilled here.

Dr McLoughlin said that the wells would be much shallower in Ireland. (...)

Comment received from Farms Matter irishfarmsmatter@gmail.com

Aedin was 100% misquoted on rte web site; rte is correcting it.
Liam

Fears mount over threat of fracking

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/local-national/northern-ireland/fears-mount-over-threat-of-fracking-16161070.html> (19 May 2012)

(...) **Rathlin Energy** confirmed that the results of the survey are now being studied.

"The gravity and magnetic data recorded from this airborne survey is now being processed into a form that could help to identify naturally occurring mineral deposits," a statement said.

Fracking is "not without risk" - EPA report calls for more research and monitoring



<http://www.leitrimobserver.ie/news/fracking-is-not-without-risk-epa-report-calls-for-more-research-and-monitoring-1-3847029> Leitrim Observer , 18 May 2012

Sinn Fein says it will ban Fracking - <http://www.leitrimobserver.ie/news/local/sinn-fein-says-it-will-ban-fracking-1-3846965> (16 May 2012)

Monday, May 14, 2012

PROACTIVE NEWS SUMMARY: Enegi Oil, Chariot Oil & Gas, Providence Resources, Equatorial Resources, Firestone Diamonds

http://www.proactiveinvestors.co.uk/companies/market_reports/42765/proactive-news-summary-enegi-oil-chariot-oil-gas-providence-resources-equatorial-resources-firestone-diamonds-42765.html

Cove Energy directors to back Irish coast oil exploration -

<http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/finance/2012/0514/1224316065925.html>

Terra Energy has three licence application options pending in the Celtic Sea and is looking at other opportunities. The company was established in 2008 by Michael Nolan to exploit alternative energy sources such as shale gas, but it refocused on exploration in 2010 when Dublin-based Raglan Capital invested. Raglan will be the largest shareholder in the new group with a 12 per cent stake. Cathal Friel of Raglan will be the non-executive chairman.



THOUGHTS – OPINION



From our campaigner (see also UK news)

Shale gas debate needs a dose of economic realism

<http://www.engineeringnews.co.za/article/shale-gas-debate-needs-a-dose-of-economic-realism-2012-03-16>

This bit is interesting:

- > The second problem with the industry hype is that the overall
- > decline rate for US natural gas wells is estimated at 32% a year,
- > and the rate is considerably higher for shale gas wells – between
- > 63% and 85% in the first year, according to Canadian gas expert
- > David Hughes. This means that well drilling activity has to be
- > maintained continuously just to keep the rate of gas output constant.

This, of course, makes shale gas a very expensive business. This, in turn, needs expensive gas. So what happens in a 'bubble', where gas is produced into a recessionary market? The price per therm drops, making fracking uneconomic, you hope.

Reporter: John Bailey

At 8.40 a.m. last Tuesday, the B.B.C. Today programme interviewed Lord Smith, who is the head of the English E.P.A. The interview produced two particular points of interest, one of which could be major for all of us concerned about "fracking". He stated that "there are problems with "fracking". For those of you up to speed, you will see the significance of this, and what can happen next.....

Useful, but not as significant, was his endorsement...subject to problem solving...and support for fracking.

MOVIES- SONGS

"Jim Dillon from Kiltyclogher speaks about why he is against fracking. This short piece was filmed by Gearoid Lynch (No Fracking Ireland) and a South African film crew who are making a film about fracking to be released in September.

This interview was filmed in the home place of Sean Mac Diarmada, one of the leaders of the 1916 rising.

The small thatched house is in the townland of Laughty Barr in north Leitrim, also known locally as Scregg."

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TwasQTcB87Q&feature=share>

Huge rally to stop coal seam gas

<http://www.echonetdaily.net.au/?iid=62887&sr=0#folio=1>

received from:

Dr Mariann Lloyd-Smith PhD (Law)

Senior Advisor, IPEN - International POPs Elimination Network

Senior Advisor, National Toxics Network Inc.

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www.ntn.org.au

www.ipen.org

EU -NEWS

EU PARLIAMENT



16th EUROPEAN GREEN PARTY COUNCIL
Copenhagen, 11-13 May 2012

European Greens say NO to shale gas extraction (fracking) in Europe

<http://europeangreens.eu/news/egp-council-adopts-strong-resolution-shale-gas>

In the pdf link you can find the last draft of the resolution. That should be the final one, voted in Copenhagen one week ago.

<http://frackingfreeireland.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/Fracking-resolution--European-Greens.pdf>

From: OLEJARNIK Pawel, IEA/OCE [mailto:Pawel.OLEJARNIK@iea.org]
Sent: 16 May 2012 19:34
To: OLEJARNIK Pawel, IEA/OCE
Subject: Save the date: "Golden Rules for a Golden Age of Gas", Wednesday, May 30, 09h30, European Parliament

Just one day after its international press launch, the **International's Energy Agency's latest [World Energy Outlook Special Report](#)** on unconventional gas "**Golden Rules for a Golden Age of Gas**" will be presented at the European Parliament by [IEA Chief Economist Dr. Fatih Birol](#) on **Wednesday, May 30, at 09h30**. Under the patronage of Amalia Sartori, Chair of Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE), and hosted by Bogusław Sonik, Member of Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety Committee (ENVI), the event will take place in **conference room P7C050**.

Technology is opening up possibilities for unconventional natural gas to play a major role in the future global energy mix, a development that could ease concerns about the reliability, affordability and security of energy supply. Countries around the world are looking to emulate the experience of North America in developing unconventional gas, opening up the possibility of a major boost to gas supply worldwide and moving us towards a "Golden Age of Gas". But there are a number of hurdles that will need to be overcome, not least of which are the various environmental concerns associated with its extraction. **More details on the forthcoming IEA report are attached.**

Please register your participation in the European Parliament's launch of the IEA's World Energy Outlook Special Report on unconventional gas by writing to boguslaw.sonik@europarl.europa.eu before 24th of May. **External participants needing a badge must also provide name, date of birth, nationality, passport or ID number.**

Seating is limited, therefore registration is on a first come serve basis.

For further questions on the IEA's World Energy Outlook Special Report "Golden Rules for a Golden Age of Gas", please feel free to contact pawel.olejarnik@iea.org.

UK

Government backtracks on fracking

Ministers decide there is not enough gas under UK to justify controversial 'earthquake' drilling

<http://www.independent.co.uk/environment/green-living/government-backtracks-on-fracking-7768853.html>

Comments/addition to article

...Now senior coalition figures have agreed that shale gas has the potential to be deeply controversial without securing major benefits in lowering carbon emissions or reducing energy costs.

...(note: **UK shale spin-meister Nick Grealy is not amused and also sceptical about this story** that broke today in one of the main UK Sunday papers:
<http://www.nohotair.co.uk/gas-guru-blog/shale-gas-2012/168-energy-policy/2520-misinformation-on-uk-shale-at-highest-levels>)

... ..

Hi all,

Just to say that in the **Parliamentary debate today, (22 May)** the government insisted that this was just a media line and that in fact they are not wavering – but staying 'cautious and balanced' on their position.

Jenny

Jennifer Rosenberg

Climate and Energy Campaign,

Friends of the Earth (England, Wales and Northern Ireland)

26-28 Underwood Street, London, N1 7JQ

.....
Full article

The Government has rejected shale gas technology as a solution to Britain's energy crisis, conceding it will do little to cut bills or keep the lights on.

Supporters of the fracking technology – which blasts water, sand and chemicals at extreme pressures to release gas trapped deep in rock – argue it could be the single greatest factor in transforming Britain's energy market, reducing our reliance on foreign imports and dramatically reducing costs.

But The Independent on Sunday has learned that industry experts made clear at a meeting attended by senior ministers, including David Cameron and Ed Davey, the Lib Dem energy secretary, that the UK's reserves were smaller than first thought and could be uneconomical to extract.

Now senior coalition figures have agreed that shale gas has the potential to be deeply controversial without securing major benefits in lowering carbon emissions or reducing energy costs.

The revelation, ahead of the publication this week of major reforms of the energy market, will be welcomed by green campaigners who have been deeply opposed to clearing the way for a new generation of gas power plants, and voiced serious concerns about the environmental impact, including the potential for fracking to trigger earthquakes and contaminate water supplies.

Joss Garman, from Greenpeace, said: "The shale gas bubble has burst. Despite all the hype, even the energy companies now acknowledge shale gas isn't the answer to Britain's energy needs. Ministers are having to face up to the fact that there isn't much of it, it won't bring down bills, and it's damaging to our climate."

The Prime Minister convened the Downing Street summit to hear from companies including Shell, Centrica and Schlumberger, which have been working on shale gas projects in America and exploring the potential of supplies in Ukraine and China.

The ministers were told Britain was not in a position to exploit vast amounts of its own shale gas stores. "The reserves aren't absolutely huge compared with the likes of America, Ukraine and North Africa," said a senior government source. "And we are relatively densely populated. It is a question of how much we can get out, and at what cost. There is a not-insignificant amount of domestic supply, but not a game-changing amount."

Mr Davey now rejects the idea that a rush to bring shale gas online will have the biggest impact on reducing household energy bills. Speaking after the Downing Street meeting, he said industry experts were "clear that it would take time for shale gas to be exploited in the UK" and cautioned that the reserves "are not quite as large as some have been speculating".

In 2010, a British Geological Survey estimated that, based on experience in the US, UK shales could hold 150 billion cubic metres of gas, equivalent to roughly two years' of UK demand. While some shale gas exploration in the UK could still go ahead, it will be "very cautionary", with tight regulations on both environmental impacts and the effects on people living near by. The energy company Cuadrilla Resources has admitted that operations to exploit a substantial shale gas field near Blackpool were responsible for two earth tremors a year ago.

Mark Hanafin, managing director of the energy production division of Centrica, played down the UK's potential to cash in on the technology. "UK shale production... I think it's important and we should develop it, but I don't think it's going to be a game changer," Mr Hanafin said in Paris earlier this month, according to Dow Jones.

A Shell spokesman said that "development will be a bit slower in Europe" because of problems of both geology and community impact. "UK shale gas is unproven geologically, but we are taking a look to see what the potential might be."

On Tuesday, Mr Davey will publish the Government's long-awaited Energy Bill, promising that it will bring down energy bills and secure future supplies. He will make clear that Britain must not be dependent on gas, despite George Osborne's insistence in the Budget that "gas is cheap, has much less carbon than coal and will be the largest single source of our electricity in the coming years". Jennifer Webber, from the industry body RenewableUK, said the reforms must instead "ensure that the expansion of renewable energy is at the heart of our energy strategy".

BANS - MORATORIA in Europe

Reporter: Geert de Cock

Some good news on the EU fracking front. Recently, both Romania and the Czech republic announced a moratorium on fracking. Germany is also having its doubts.

See this report on the Czech

situation: <http://af.reuters.com/article/commoditiesNews/idAFL5E8G73DI20120507>

The interesting part of the Czech justification for a moratorium is that the government is concerned about its own liability for inadequate regulation of the shale gas industry! It would be nice, if elected officials would also be concerned about the environmental and health impacts of fracking on local people. But hey, whatever works to delay and ultimately ban this industry!

The European Commission has also started to be open to a slightly more active stance on fracking, maybe some 'soft' guidelines and maybe, just maybe some legislative action. Might be enough to scare off some investors.

Geert Decock

Policy Officer - Food & Water Europe

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GERMANY

<http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/germany-rejects-fracking-to-tap-natural-gas-a-831764.html>

CZECH REPUBLIC

Czech Republic plans moratorium – confirmation

http://www.mzp.cz/en/news_120509_shale_gas

Confirmation from the Ministry yesterday of the Reuters

The Ministry of the Environment is preparing a moratorium on prospecting for shale gas

Press release: 09.05.2012

The greatest risk entailed in the current prospecting legislation is legal uncertainty.

The Ministry of the Environment is preparing a proposal for the Government to announce a moratorium on prospecting for shale gas.

"No new prospecting would be permitted during the period of the moratorium. The greatest risk both for the State and for prospecting companies lies in the legal uncertainty ensuing from imperfect laws on EIA, the Mining Act and the Geological Works Act, where the two latter laws are more than 20 years old. I would not like to find myself in a situation where a private company claims lost profits in arbitration against the Czech Republic simply because the Czech legislation was unable to adequately cover this area. It is my ambition to lay down legal provisions that will stipulate clear rules of the game. This is not possible under the current legislation," says the Minister of the Environment, Tomáš Chalupa.

A moratorium would be a legal act similar to the Government resolution on limits for coal mining. It would apply for a period of approx. 1.5 to 2 years, during which the existing laws would be modified, including particularly the Geological Works Act, the Mining Act and the EIA Act, which currently do not provide, either separately or in their mutual relationship, sufficient legal certainty that would protect the Czech Republic, for example, against possible arbitration. The Ministry of the Environment has carried out an analysis of the legislation and concluded that the current laws are not appropriate for technologically complex surveys, such as prospecting for shale gas.

"The decision to cancel the delimited prospecting area in the Náchod and Broumov regions and refer the matter for new discussion is based on three grounds. Firstly, it is necessary to take proper account of the basic public interest consisting in protection of resources of potable water, as well as of nature and the landscape. Secondly, the statements presented by the affected entities were not properly dealt with and, for example, municipalities were not provided with information or sufficient space to state their opinion on this matter. And lastly, the procedure was not in line with the Code of Administrative Procedure," adds Minister of the Environment Tomáš Chalupa in respect of the situation in Náchod and Broumov areas.

Matyáš Vitík, spokesperson of the Ministry of the Environment

BULGARIA - reporter: Borislav Sandov Member of the Coordination team, Climate Action Coalition Bulgaria

On 17th May 2012 Temporary Parliamentary Commission for study, analysis and discussion of best practices and regulatory solutions for exploration and mining (bla-bla) has decided that the moratorium on exploration and extraction of shale gas has to drop some of the provisions. The new text is an 'open door' for some of the fracking wells. The Bulgarian minister of energy, economy and tourism, Delyan Dobrev, commented on the adopted changes in the shale gas moratorium stating that 'the moratorium shall remain, as long as the people are not properly assured that shale gas production does not pose a threat to them or the environment'. This changes has to be confirm from the Parliament and will probably happened this week, on Wednesday 23th.

On 16th and 17th of May in Sofia Chevron has promoted again its technologies and studies on secret meetings with scientists, politicians and lobbyists. In advance we got the information about the first one, which was held in Bulgarian academy of sciences on 16th. In text of the invitation was mentioned that the mail has not to be forward, otherwise it is "possible to get to the greens". On the exact day the whole building was locked and 7 people were in charge to keep the entrance free of 'anti-frack activists'.

So far 'Fracking free Bulgaria' has been preparing new protests on 22nd of May in 7 cities:

Sofia: <https://www.facebook.com/events/300972103321799/>

Plovdiv: <https://www.facebook.com/events/377737078928936/>

Varna: <https://www.facebook.com/events/297983143624028/>

V. Tarnovo: <https://www.facebook.com/events/442385052457555/>

Dobrich: <https://www.facebook.com/events/417929138241340/>

Bourgas: <https://www.facebook.com/events/370950886285278/>

Comment by Romanian Greens:

This is not good at all...In Bucharest Chevron held a closed meeting on May 15th, in Bucharest University under Bucharest Geoscience Forum organisation co-participating with National Agency for Mineral Resources (NAMR)... Secrecy & conspiracy against our people and environment!

NAMR accepted them not only as sponsors for the Conference but greeted them as new members of the Forum!!

They did all the efforts to keep public and the greens outside the meeting as well.

We need to stay together! as they work in a very concerted way in our countries

Georgeta Ionescu, Romanian Greens, Deputy Chair

GLOBAL NEWS

Australia: 7,000 march against fracking -

http://climateandcapitalism.com/2012/05/14/australia-7000-march-against-fracking/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=australia-7000-march-against-fracking

[CSG Free Northern Rivers](#) brought 7,000 people to the streets of Lismore on May 12 in a colorful and outspoken show of solidarity against Coal Seam Gas Mining in the region. And concerns over coal mining loom not far behind in a groundswell push to renewable energy sources.

Lismore is a city of about 45,000 people in New South Wales, near the east coast of Australia, about 750 km (475 miles) north of Sydney.

Huge rally to stop coal seam gas

<http://www.echonetedaily.net.au/?iid=62887&sr=0#folio=1>

received from:

[Dr Mariann Lloyd-Smith PhD \(Law\)](#)

Senior Advisor, IPEN - International POPs Elimination Network

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www.ipen.org

Vermont becomes first state to ban HF - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mL-I22DDNFY>

Vermont has become the first U.S. state to ban the natural gas drilling practice of hydraulic fracturing, or fracking. On Wednesday, Vermont Gov. Peter Shumlin signed the measure into law at a ceremony attended by environmentalists and a group of high school students who pushed for the ban.

Gov. Peter Shumlin: "This bill will ensure we do not inject chemicals into groundwater in a desperate pursuit for energy. It is a big moment. I hope other states will follow us. The science on fracking is uncertain at best. Let the other states be the guinea pigs. Let the Green Mountain State preserve its clean water, its lakes, its rivers and its quality of life."

New law makes Vermont the first state to ban fracking

reporter: Paul Burns

Montpelier, VT – Gov. Peter Shumlin made Vermont the first state in the nation to ban the practice of hydraulic fracturing for natural gas when he signed H.464 into law today.

Shumlin praised environmental advocates and legislative sponsors for their leadership on the bill. He also noted that the new law could be a model for other states to follow.

"Fracking for gas is not the solution to our energy needs, it's part of the problem," said Paul Burns, executive director of the Vermont Public Interest Research Group. "I'm proud that Vermont has a governor who understands the difference between a problem and a solution and is willing to stand up for clean renewable energy over fossil fuels."

Fracking is a highly controversial method of extracting natural gas from dense rock formations deep in the ground by injecting huge quantities of water, sand and chemicals under high pressure. Citizens in places like Pennsylvania, Ohio and New York have raised concerns about fracking endangering water supplies, air quality and public health.

Yesterday, at a rally and concert in Albany, NY, hundreds of activists joined celebrities such as Mark Ruffalo, Melissa Leo and Natalie Merchant to encourage New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo to ban fracking in that state. VPIRG's Paul Burns was also invited to speak about Vermont's role in becoming the first state not only to ban fracking, but also the disposal of dangerous fracking waste.

"It was an honor to be asked to speak for Vermont at an event like that," said Burns. "The way the crowd erupted in applause when they heard that the bill would be signed into law today was amazing. It gave me a good sense of just how important our leadership role can be."

Gov. Shumlin highlighted the work on Sen. Ginny Lyons and Representatives Tony Klein, David Deen, Kate Webb and Jim McCullough in shepherding the bill through.

Paul Burns
Executive Director
VPIRG/VPIREF
141 Main Street, Suite 6
Montpelier, VT 05602
802-223-5221 ext.1

Environmental Defense Fund is Not Against Hydraulic Fracking

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702304070304577393971356925162.html>
THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

EDF Not Against Hydraulic Fracking

Kimberley Strassel's "[The 'Crucify Them' Presidency](#)" (Potomac Watch, May 4) makes the inaccurate claim that former EPA official Al Armendariz "was working with groups like the Environmental Defense Fund . . . against hydraulic fracturing." Environment Defense Fund is not and never has been "against hydraulic fracturing."

Our organization does not advocate for or against this technological process. We do look for opportunities to ensure that unconventional natural-gas development delivers environmental benefit, not environmental harm. Some Journal readers may recall that I have written on this page about the way forward for natural gas. And all of your readers should understand that EDF is working hard to achieve environmentally responsible development of this energy resource.

While at Southern Methodist University, Prof. Al Armendariz produced an emissions inventory for EDF that recommended ways to reduce emissions from natural gas operations. The study

was by no means opposed to hydraulic fracturing. He later served briefly on EDF's Texas advisory board. None of this makes EDF "against hydraulic fracturing." In fact, a simple fact check would have shown that I served on the secretary of energy's advisory board on the subject, and that our organization is now partnering with industry on a range of initiatives designed to make natural-gas development safer.

Fred Krupp

President

Environmental Defense Fund

New York

Good for a laugh!

Fracking Industry Now Largest Employer Of Recent PR Graduates

SAN FRANCISCO—A new labor market study published Wednesday has found that oil companies with hydraulic fracturing interests have outpaced the tobacco industry, Wall Street, and the gun lobby to become the largest employer of recent college graduates with public relations degrees. "These days, media-savvy professionals who know how to publicize questionable scientific data in order to downplay the environmental dangers of forcing toxic fluids into the ground can pretty much write their own ticket," said Bart Hobijn of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, adding that this year at least 2,500 graduating seniors will be put to work obfuscating the levels of carcinogens in groundwater. "And in the long term, the job demand will only increase. Fracking has become a high-growth sector in which there is an extraordinary amount of spinning to be done." When asked how he enjoyed his new position with a Pittsburgh-based fracking operator, recently hired PR manager Matt Coleman said he believed the practice is a "safe, clean way to increase our natural gas reserves and reduce U.S. dependence on foreign oil."

The Marcellus Effect

<http://marcelluseffect.blogspot.com/2012/05/fracking-affects-human-health-but-who.html>

SUNDAY, MAY 13, 2012

Marcellus Drilling Affects Human Health - but no one's keeping track

A couple weeks ago AP reporter Kevin Begos reported that the Pennsylvania Department of Health had received fewer than 30 health complaints on drilling. This information resulted from a FOIL request, but in light of the fact that the DOH noted "several dozen" complaints in the first half of 2011, it makes little sense. Except maybe to point out that the system intended to protect public health is broken.

Upon closer investigation, AP has learned that the Dept. of Health isn't following through on all drilling-related health complaints they've received. Furthermore, many people may not even be reporting health complaints because the DOH website doesn't have a specific place for people to file such complaints. And, the agency has no current investigations regarding people who claim gas drilling has impacted their health.

The fact is this: drilling and production of gas is not healthy for children and other living things. People living in the Marcellus drilling fields are suffering ill health, and it's not just the drilling; compressor stations and storage fields are contributing to health problems too. It's not just groundwater and fracking - it's the whole enchilada.

People are suffering from rashes, headaches, fatigue, dizziness, nausea, nosebleeds, sore throats, sinus congestion, blisters, skin lesions, respiratory distress, and hearing difficulties. They are suffering from vomiting, diarrhea, pain, elevated heart rate, hair loss, headaches, eye irritation, intestinal cancer, ruptured spleens, stomach cramps, loss of balance, slurred speech, memory loss, and tremors.

One 32-year old woman, living in a home 200 feet from a gas well, became comatose for three

weeks. Her liver failed, her lungs filled with fluid. Her heart valves had been encrusted by an unknown foreign body. When tested, her blood had 11 times the "maximum allowable" amount of barium, and that was two years after she had moved from the drill site. Recently her 12-year old daughter has been having balance problems, falling down while walking.

So, how many people are we talking about? In media reports alone, we're looking at close to 90 Pennsylvania residents who have complained about health impacts related to drilling. There are more, for sure; people who can't - or won't - report illnesses because they may not see a link to industrial activities in their neighborhood. While asthma is related to pollution, the last asthma study PA completed was in 2009, for data collected before drilling really started.

Then there are things like heart attacks, also influenced by air pollution. A survey done in one Barnett Shale community revealed anecdotal evidence linking an increase in the rate of heart attacks with exposure to drilling emissions.

The lack of health complaints in PA does not mean that people aren't suffering health impacts. It means that no one is collecting this vital public health data.

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REPORTS - RESEARCH

Environmental researchers

Fracking production "outstrips scientific knowledge"

<http://environmentalresearchweb.org/cws/article/news/49650> (21 May 2012)

COMMENT ON EPA REPORT <http://www.greenparty.ie/news.html?n=67>

We can protect our water supplies and our climate, and get our energy elsewhere rather than developing this polluting technology.

Green Party Leader Eamon Ryan said today: "We welcome the publication of the EPA study into the environmental effects of hydraulic fracking of shale gas. While the report does not come to specific conclusions, it does acknowledge the fundamental risks that are attached with this technology."

"The fact that the emissions from shale gas may exceed those from coal means that the technology fails the very first climate test. In Ireland we have massive supplies of renewable energy which will be cleaner, cheaper and more secure. We need to say no to fracking and get on with the real task of building a clean energy economy that can enrich our country."

"The acknowledgement that the shale deposits in Ireland and Europe have far more complex geology than in America is significant. The evidence that the developers have been using to support their application is not relevant here. There already have real problems in the United States, but here the problems of ground water and other pollution would be far harder to manage."

"We are lucky in Ireland in having the availability of clean water supplies. Our food, tourism and high technology industries depend upon it. We also happen to need it for our very existence. If we go down the fracking route, we put our water at risk and that is something we should never do," concluded Eamon Ryan.

EPA REPORT -

http://www.epa.ie/downloads/pubs/research/sss/UniAberdeen_FrackingReport.pdf

EPA releases preliminary study into the use of hydraulic fracturing ("fracking") technology

11th May 2012: The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has today published a report from a preliminary study on current knowledge about the environmental considerations and impacts of shale gas exploration and extraction, and in particular the use of hydraulic fracturing technology. The study: *Hydraulic Fracturing or 'Fracking': A Short Summary of Current Knowledge and Potential Environmental Impacts* was conducted by the University of Aberdeen.

The report provides an introduction to the environmental aspects of fracking including a review of regulatory approaches used in other countries and areas for further investigation and research.

The information provided by this preliminary research project will now be used to inform a more comprehensive study to be commissioned by the EPA, in co-operation with the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, the scoping of which will also involve the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government and the Commission for Energy Regulation. The EPA expects to commission this second study in 2012.

The report *Hydraulic Fracturing ('Fracking'): A Short Summary of Current Knowledge and Potential Environmental Impacts* is available on the EPA website at <http://www.epa.ie/downloads/pubs/research/sss/>.

Further information:

Note that the report author Dr David Healy is **available for media interviews today (Friday May 11) between 12-1pm only**.

Please contact Kelly Potts, Communications Office, University of Aberdeen on 0044 224 272960 to arrange.

Niamh Hatchell EPA Media Relations Office 053-9170770 (24 hours)

Note to Editors:

Main findings: The main findings of the preliminary study are set out under three headings: potential environmental impacts, regulatory approaches used in other countries and establishing best practice.

Potential Environmental Impacts:

- According to the study, the integrity of the well is vital for minimising potential impacts, particularly with regard to groundwater contamination from leaks and well blowouts, where fracking fluid in particular could enter groundwater aquifers. Fracking fluid could possibly contain chemical additives, methane (natural gas), and other substances present in the shale such as metals and naturally occurring radioactive material.
 - The research notes that knowledge of local geology is important in order to assess the potential for impacts on groundwater quality and tremors/earthquakes. Shale formations in Europe are generally more complex than in the US, where many such projects have taken place, and detailed knowledge of local geology may therefore be of more importance in Europe.
 - The report found that there is uncertainty surrounding the "carbon footprint" of natural gas from shale, with disagreement as to whether it is equivalent to conventionally extracted natural gas, or whether the effective footprint is significantly greater due to leakage of methane to atmosphere during the extraction process. This is an issue for the global environment because of climate change and may become increasingly important if shale gas extraction continues to develop.
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- The report also outlined other potential impacts due to the large volumes of water used in fracking, and provides information on the nature of additives which have been used in fracking operations, as well as outlining some of the options currently available for storage and disposal of flowback fluid.

Regulatory approaches in other Countries:

The study looked at regulatory approaches in Europe, North America and other regions, and presents available information on regulatory approaches in various jurisdictions. The study states that the US has the most experience in this area, as the industry is most developed there. However, it makes clear that EU Directives on Mining Waste and water protection (i.e. the Water Framework Directive) will place significant constraints on shale gas extraction activities in Europe which do not exist in the US, with regard to disposal of wastes and waste fluids.

Establishing Best Practice:

The report suggests topics for further research to determine Best Practice, such as the feasibility of additive-free fracking fluids, flowback fluid treatment, the disposal and minimisation of methane losses to air and an increased understanding of shale geometry in complex formations.

The report also presents a list of requirements to be considered in establishing and achieving Best Practice. These include adequate monitoring and assessment of shale gas extraction installations and the receiving environment.

Background to the University of Aberdeen study:

In October 2011 the EPA commissioned the University of Aberdeen to conduct preliminary research to document what is currently known about the environmental considerations and impacts of shale gas exploration and extraction, the regulatory approaches used in other countries, best practice, and in particular the use of hydraulic fracturing ("fracking") technology. The budget for this study was limited to €6,000.

The objectives of the research project were to provide information on:

- The potential environmental impacts of fracking, in particular, and shale gas extraction in general.
- The potential for methane and chemical migration into groundwater as a result of fracking.
- The role of local geology in successful fracking and shale gas extraction.
- The regulatory approaches taken in other countries where the fracking technique has been used.
- Best Environmental Practice for shale gas exploration and extraction using the fracking technique, including the possibility of fracking without the use of chemicals.

Background to the Regulation of Unconventional Fossil Fuels and Shale Gas involving Fracking in relation to Ireland

In early 2011, the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources awarded two-year petroleum licensing options to three companies in respect of areas in the north-west and mid-west of the country. A licensing option gives the holder first right to apply for an exclusive exploration licence over the area concerned. Standard exploration activity, such as carrying out of seismic surveys and exploration drilling, may not be carried out during the term of these licensing options, however should exploration licences be granted in 2013, then the holders would have to commit to drill at least one exploration well in the first three years of the exploration licence. The exploration phase is subject to environmental impact assessment.

The extraction of shale gas on a commercial scale would require an IPPC licence in accordance with the provisions of the EPA Acts 1992 to 2011. Other regulators likely to have a statutory role in relation to the use of hydraulic fracturing include DCENR, the Commission for Energy Regulation (CER), An Bord Pleanála, local authorities and the Health & Safety Authority. The EU Commission has set up an Ad Hoc Technical Working Group to examine the regulation of such activities at EU level.

Fracking Fluids Could Contaminate Freshwater Aquifers, Says Study <http://truth-out.org/news/item/9076-the-potential-for-fracking-fluids-to-reach-freshwater-aquifers>

original study: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/90528680/Fracking-Aquifers>
MINING - series of interviews by hydrogeologist

received from Mariann Lloyd-Smith biomap@oztoxics.org

"Mining-induced seismic activity also is an often-observed and well-documented phenomenon, with instances from all over the world of small to medium sized earthquakes. Such quakes can be caused by either removing or injecting 'mass' into the 'flawed' subsurface strata. "

Hi all,

You might like to listen to these series of interviews by hydrogeologist, John Polglase, where he examines some consequences of mining and drilling activities on the world beneath our feet.

[http://www.aqob.com.au/details.php?
p_id=832&listid=584&slistid=&seo=Earth_shattering:_mining_induced_seismic_activity&menu
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STORIES

[http://www.npr.org/2012/05/15/152268475/sick-from-fracking-doctors-patients-seek-
answers?sc=17&f=1001](http://www.npr.org/2012/05/15/152268475/sick-from-fracking-doctors-patients-seek-answers?sc=17&f=1001)

Sick From Fracking? Doctors, Patients Seek Answers
by Rob Stein

- May 15, 2012

Kay Allen had just started work, and everything seemed quiet at the Cornerstone Care community health clinic in Burgettstown, Pa. But things didn't stay quiet for long.

"All the girls, they were yelling at me in the back, 'You gotta come out here quick. You gotta come out here quick,' " said Allen, 59, a nurse from Weirton, W.Va.

Allen rushed out front and knew right away what all the yelling was about. The whole place reeked — like someone had spilled a giant bottle of nail polish remover.

"I told everybody to get outside and get fresh air. So we went outside. And Aggie said, 'Kay, I'm going to be sick.' But before I get in, to get something for her to throw up in, she had to go over the railing," she said.

Nothing like this had ever happened in the 20 years that Allen has been at the clinic. After about 45 minutes, she thought the coast was clear and took everyone back inside.

"It was fine. But the next thing you know, they're calling me again. There was another gust. Well, the one girl, Miranda, she was sitting at the registration place, and you could tell she'd had too much of it. And Miranda got overcome by that and she passed out," she said.

'It's The Unknown I Think That's The Scariest Thing'

This sort of thing has been happening for weeks. Mysterious gusts of fumes keep wafting through the clinic.

In fact, just the day before being interviewed by NPR, Allen suddenly felt like she had been engulfed by one of these big invisible bubbles.

"And all of a sudden your tongue gets this metal taste on it. And it feels like it's enlarging, and it just feels like you're not getting enough air in, because your throat gets real 'burn-y.' And the next thing I know, I ... passed out," Allen said.

Half a dozen of Allen's co-workers stopped coming in. One old-timer quit. No one can figure out what's going on. For doctors and nurses used to taking care of sick people, it's unnerving to suddenly be the patients.

"It's the unknown I think that's the scariest thing," she said.

Richard Rinehart, who runs the rural clinic, can't help but wonder whether the natural gas drilling going on all around the area may have something to do with what's been happening.

"I lay in bed at night thinking all kinds of theories. Is something coming through the air from some process that they're using? I know they use a lot of chemicals and so forth. Certainly that could be a culprit. We're wondering, Is something coming through the ground?" Rinehart said, noting that he'd just noticed a new drill on a hill overlooking the back of the clinic.

Now, no one knows whether the gas drilling has anything to do with the problems at the clinic. It could easily turn out to be something completely unrelated. There's a smelting plant down the road and old coal mines everywhere.

"Anything could be possible, and we just are trying to get to the root of it," he said.

Mysterious Symptoms, Lots Of Questions

People living near gas well drilling around the country are reporting similar problems, plus headaches, rashes, wheezing, aches and pains and other symptoms.

Doctors like Julie DeRosa, who works at Cornerstone, aren't sure how to help people with these mysterious symptoms.

"I don't want to ignore symptoms that may be clues to a serious condition. I also don't want to order a lot of unnecessary tests. I don't want to feed any kind of hysteria," DeRosa said.

To try to figure out what's going on, the clinic called the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, which is investigating. It also started testing the air for chemicals, monitoring wind direction around the clinic and keeping diaries of everyone's symptoms. In addition, the clinic contacted Raina Rippel, project director for the Southwest Pennsylvania Environmental Health Project.

The local nonprofit was set up recently to help people in this kind of situation. Her team tested tap water from inside a men's room and from a stream out back.

Rippel says she knows people in the area have a lot of questions: "Is my water fit to drink? Is the air fit to breathe? Am I going to suffer long-term health impacts from this?"

Connecting Experts In Search Of Answers

To try to answer these questions, her project is connecting doctors and patients with toxicologists, occupational health doctors, environmental scientists and other experts.

"People go from physician to physician, because 'nobody seemed to be able to treat this awful rash that I have,' or 'nobody seemed to be able to deal with my gastrointestinal pain that I have.' And so they go from place to place, trying to find someone who can do that," said David Brown, a toxicologist who helped set up the project.

The project is also starting to educate doctors about what kinds of tests they can try and what kinds of advice to give. In addition, a nurse practitioner visits and counsels people who are sick.

Dr. Sean Porbin, a private doctor who advises the project, gives the project's nurse practitioner advice when she needs it. But Porbin is skeptical that many people are getting sick from the drilling, which is commonly called "fracking." There are about 5,000 new wells in Pennsylvania.

"If it's true, you'd expect people dropping all over the place based on the amount of fracking that's going on here. You would look around and see people dropping like flies. It's not the

case. I don't see anybody affected. And it's not for a lack of looking," he said.

Porbin, who like a lot of people in the area has leased some of his land for drilling, wants to make sure no one's missing more mundane explanations — like Lyme disease, sinus infections and migraines.

"We have an old saying in medicine: When you hear hoof beats, you don't think zebras — you think horses," he said.

Lots Of Anecdotes, Little Evidence

The natural gas industry says there's no evidence the drilling is causing health problems.

Public health experts say the only way anyone is going to really know whether the drilling is making people sick is to do some big studies.

"There's a lot of anecdotal evidence out there. And so a well-conducted study looking at a number of communities could help us better understand if there's an impact, what its magnitude [is], how we should avoid having that impact if there is one," said Christopher J. Portier, director of the National Center for Environmental Health and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry.

In the meantime, patients and doctors don't have a lot of options. In western Pennsylvania, a lot of them are referred to Charles Werntz at West Virginia University. Werntz, an occupational medicine specialist, is used to dealing with chemical exposures. Lately, he's seeing more people who live near the drilling.

But for now, he says he can't really do much more than offer basic advice: Drink bottled water, air out the house, leave your shoes outside. If it's still too bad, move — if possible.

"It is frustrating. As a physician, I like it when somebody can come to me with a problem and I can help them solve the problem. Whether it's through a specific treatment or, you know, whatever. And this is frustrating, because in this case, the treatment is to get away from the exposure. And that's hard to do," Werntz said.

Back at Cornerstone, Rinehart just wants to get back to taking care of patients.

"We are in the business of trying to improve and maintain the public's health here. And now we are in the throes of it. And we're trying not to point fingers," Rinehart said.

The next day, people got sick again, and the clinic had to be evacuated once more. So they've moved the clinic to temporary offices until someone figures out what's going on.

Wednesday on Morning Edition, NPR's Jon Hamilton will report on researchers who think they have a good shot at answering whether drilling is making people sick.

The audio version of this story was produced by Rebecca Davis. [Copyright 2012 National Public Radio]

To learn more about the NPR iPhone app, go to <http://iphone.npr.org/recommendnprnews>