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CONTACT

Kathleen Sutcliffe, Earthjustice, 202-667-4500, ext. 235, ksutcliffe@earthjustice.org
Leeann Brown, Environmental Working Group, 202-939-9146, leeann@ewg.org
Suzanne Struglinski, NRDC, 202-289-2387, sstruglinski@nrdc.org

Advocates Laud Oscar Nominees, Members of Congress for Speaking Out On Dangerous Gas Drilling

Controversial gas drilling technique must be regulated

WASHINGTON, DC – Oscar nominees stood alongside members of Congress and environmental advocates today to speak out on a controversial form of natural gas extraction known as hydraulic fracturing -- in which drillers blast millions of gallons of chemically treated water into the earth to force gas from underground deposits.

Director Josh Fox is up for a Best Documentary award for GASLAND, a searing indictment of the hazards associated with hydraulic fracturing -- also known as “fracking.” Fox was joined by Best Supporting Actor nominee Mark Ruffalo, whose home in New York's Catskill Mountains is in the path of a gas drilling rush in the Northeast.

Congressmen Maurice Hinchey (D-NY), Jared Polis (D-CO), and Rush Holt (D-NJ) warmly welcomed the actor and director and talked about efforts to close oil and gas industry loopholes in the Safe Drinking Water Act and other laws designed to protect public health.

The following is a statement from American Rivers, Catskill Mountainkeeper, Citizens Campaign for the Environment, Clean Water Network, Common Cause New York, Delaware Riverkeeper Network, Earthjustice, Earthworks, Environmental Advocates of New York, Environmental Working Group, Food & Water Watch, Natural Resources Defense Council, New York Public Interest Research Group, and Riverkeeper:

“With his Oscar-nominated documentary GASLAND, director Josh Fox and his fellow nominee Mark Ruffalo have catapulted the controversial gas drilling technique known as hydraulic fracturing into the national conversation. And thanks to the important work of dedicated congressional champions like Rep. Maurice Hinchey (D-NY), Jared Polis (D-CO), and Rush Holt (D-NJ), we have a chance to restore crucial protections from the risks associated with gas development.

“Hydraulic fracturing is currently exempted from portions of the Safe Drinking Water Act and a host of other laws designed to protect the environment and public health. Even as the Environmental Protection Agency undergoes a study on impacts to drinking water from hydraulic fracturing, the pace of fracking is rapidly accelerating and along with it, reports of drinking water contamination and other environmental problems.

“Congress needs to repeal industry loopholes for natural gas development, and soon. The millions of Americans whose health and drinking water supplies are at stake don’t have time to waste.”

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