

HYDRAULIC FRACTURING IN ILLINOIS MYTH VS. FACT

MYTH: *Hydraulic fracturing contaminates groundwater.*

FACT: Hydraulic fracturing, a method of extracting oil and natural gas from shale, has been used since the 1940s, including thousands of times over the past several decades here in Illinois. And guess what: there are zero confirmed cases of groundwater contamination from hydraulic fracturing. The U.S. EPA, state regulators, and scientific experts from MIT and Stanford (among many others) have all confirmed that fact. In April of 2012, President Obama's own EPA Administrator, Lisa Jackson, said: "In no case have we made a definitive determination that [hydraulic fracturing] has caused chemicals to enter groundwater."

MYTH: *Companies don't disclose the chemicals used during hydraulic fracturing.*

FACT: The list of additives used in hydraulic fracturing is available on FracFocus.org, which also provides specific listings on a well-by well basis. You can also view a list of these additives at EnergyInDepth.org. Furthermore, companies disclose this information on Material Safety Data Sheets, which are available at each hydraulic fracturing site. Water and sand constitute more than 99 percent of fluids used during hydraulic fracturing. In Illinois, the industry supports a regulatory package with comprehensive disclosure, including additives, geologic formations to be stimulated, flowback volume, and much more.

MYTH: *Hydraulic fracturing depletes water supplies.*

FACT: The amount of water used for hydraulic fracturing is comparatively small. A 2009 report for the U.S. Department of Energy, for instance, found that water required for hydraulic fracturing would represent about 0.8 percent of total demand in any given area. In the Barnett Shale in north Texas, water used for oil and gas activity only accounted for about 0.5 percent of total demand in 2011. In New York, regulators predict the water required for hydraulic fracturing will increase demand by only 0.24 percent, and in Colorado water used for all oil and gas activity is less than 0.1 percent of the state's total water use. The numbers in Illinois are expected to be within this general range.

MYTH: *Air emissions due to hydraulic fracturing are harmful to public health.*

FACT: Air monitoring data from state regulatory agencies do not support this. After months of air sampling in the Barnett Shale, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality concluded "there are no immediate health concerns" resulting from oil and gas operations in the region. The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection conducted air monitoring in two separate regions of the Marcellus Shale and "did not identify concentrations of any compound that would likely trigger air-related health issues associated with Marcellus Shale drilling activities."

MYTH: *Hydraulic fracturing causes earthquakes.*

FACT: The U.S. Geological Survey and the National Research Council have concluded that hydraulic fracturing does not pose a risk for inducing major earthquakes. Here's how USGS geophysicist Bill Ellsworth put it: "We don't see any connection between [hydraulic fracturing] and earthquakes of any concern to society."