

HYDRAULIC FRACTURING AND WATER USE

As Illinois works toward legislation over the safe and responsible development of the New Albany Shale, concerns have been raised regarding the use of water.

Contrary to popular rhetoric, data from Texas, Colorado, and the U.S. Department of Energy show relative water use from oil and natural gas activity – including but not necessarily limited to hydraulic fracturing – is actually quite small.

The following facts underscore this reality.

- **Colorado:** Agriculture is the largest drain on the water supply, utilizing approximately 85 percent of the state's total water demand. Hydraulic fracturing, however, accounts for [less than 0.1 percent](#).
- **New York:** Regulators have estimated that hydraulic fracturing will increase the state's total water demand by less than one quarter of one percent – [0.24 percent](#) to be exact.
- **Texas:** The water required every year for oil and gas – in the largest oil and gas producing state in the country, mind you – is [less than one percent of the state's total water use](#). Water required for hydraulic fracturing itself is about 23 percent less than the amount consumed annually by the city of Austin. (Texas rice farmers, on the other hand, use about three times more water than Austin.) Further, the Tarrant Regional Water District, which supplies water for approximately 1.7 million people in the Barnett Shale region of north Texas, stated that oil and gas drilling operations consumed a measly [0.54 percent](#) of the total water it sold in 2011.
- **U.S. Department of Energy:** According to a recent report, the water required for hydraulic fracturing in any given region was estimated to be roughly [0.8 percent of total demand](#).
- **Duke University:** A new study found that developing natural gas from shale actually results in about [35 percent less wastewater](#) than so-called conventional wells, on a per-unit-of-energy-produced basis.