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MOUNTAIN STATES

Pavillion & the Wyoming DEQ:
The Facts

Pavillion, Wyo., has been a focal point for activists eager to blame hydraulic fracturing for water quality issues in the region. The U.S. Geological Survey and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency have ***both thoroughly investigated*** *Pavillion's groundwater. USGS has documented elevated compounds dating back to the 1960s and attributed them to a range of possibilities, from naturally occurring contaminants to pesticide and agricultural runoff. Following a two-year investigation, then-EPA Region 8 Administrator Jim Martin said the agency's draft report "make[s] clear that* ***the causal link [of water contamination] to hydraulic fracturing has not been demonstrated conclusively****…".*

In 2013, the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality began its own 30-month investigation to determine if hydraulic fracturing in the region impacted water quality. WDEQ published an 80,000-page report, analyzing more than 11,700 analytical results, in 2016. Then in December 2019, WDEQ released a final report, analyzing an additional 3,650-plus samples.

FACT: WDEQ FOUND NO FRACKING-RELATED COMPOUNDS AT LEVELS ABOVE SAFE DRINKING WATER STANDARDS

WDEQ's testing of 13 water supply systems found no fracking-related compounds at levels above safe drinking standards.

"Inorganic compounds that were found over applicable drinking water standards are generally associated with **naturally occurring salts, metals and radionuclides.**"

FACT: WATER QUALITY PROBLEMS PREDATED DRILLING

WDEQ found any upward gas seepage "was **happening naturally before gas well development**."

FACT: FRACKING NOT LINKED TO WATER QUALITY PROBLEMS

WDEQ's investigation found no connection between fracking and water well contamination.

"Evidence does not indicate that hydraulic fracturing fluids have risen to shallow depths utilized by water-supply wells.

Also, based on an evaluation of hydraulic fracturing history, and methods used in the Pavillion Gas Field, **it is unlikely that hydraulic fracturing has caused any impacts to the water-supply wells**."

FACT: WDEQ SAID ELEVATED BACTERIA WAS LIKELY CAUSE OF CHANGES IN WATER COLOR AND ODOR

"Geochemical changes associated with the biodegradation of dissolved organic compounds... **likely have produced constituents associated with poor water palatability, and appear to be linked to declining well yields.**"

FACT: WDEQ FOUND ISSUES WITH EPA'S MONITORING WELLS

WDEQ asked the EPA to plug and abandon two of its monitoring wells in the Pavillion region "**due to the potential hazard they pose in relation to groundwater supplies and physical safety.**"

WDEQ has continued to study Pavillion's groundwater since 2016 in an attempt to determine the actual cause of these groundwater issues. The final 2019 report further confirmed that oil and gas operations are not likely the cause of these issues.

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