

Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League

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March 20, 2012

Good Evening:

My name is Therese Vick, Healthy, and Sustainable Communities Coordinator for Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League (BREDL). On behalf of BREDL, I appreciate this opportunity to comment. Although there are many items in the study to be addressed, I will limit my comments tonight to one observation and a few glaring omissions.

First the observation: The press releases and executive summary, as well as the comments of our own Governor paint an overly optimistic view of hydraulic fracturing in North Carolina; which is wildly inconsistent with the findings of the study we are here to discuss tonight. This political manipulation of such a serious issue facing North Carolina misleads its citizenry into a false sense of security. It is akin to having a romantic cover on a horror novel.

Now some omissions:

DENR Fails To Follow Its Own Equity Policy

NC DENR's Equity Policy states in part: Providing all citizens the opportunity for meaningful Input into decision-making processes is critical to effective government.

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To provide information for citizens and neighborhood groups to allow meaningful participation in regulatory processes.

“To meet the goals DENR will:

- Promote greater use and analysis of demographic information to identify communities that may be disproportionately impacted by sources of pollution
- Use demographic information to determine whether there is: 1) A need for greater outreach to community in order to encourage more meaningful participation, or 2) special health risks based on the nature of the population.”

There is no evidence in the document that Environmental Justice issues were considered which illustrates a complete disregard for potential Environmental Justice impacts. There is no mention of how environmental justice communities will be identified, how DENR will ensure “meaningful participation in regulatory processes” or how the community will be protected from disproportionate affects from fracking. In the state where the Environmental Justice movement was born, this omission is particularly shameful.

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The Study Omits a Mandated Section: Consumer Protection

House Bill 242 directs the Department of Justice to study consumer protection issues and include their results as part of this study. Where is it? If the section was not complete, the study should have been held until it was. It is irresponsible; there are hundreds of vulnerable landowners who may make very bad decisions without knowing and understanding all the issues.

I will end my comments this evening with this: Governor Perdue's recent industry led Pennsylvania vacation was ill advised and a betrayal of the people in the communities potentially affected by fracking- and all North Carolinians. "Bless her heart" sounds a little too tame. I can only say, "Shame on you, Governor Perdue."

Thank you for the opportunity to comment tonight.