

# FRACKING IN WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA?

No matter where you live, there are reasons for concern.

## Water Pollution

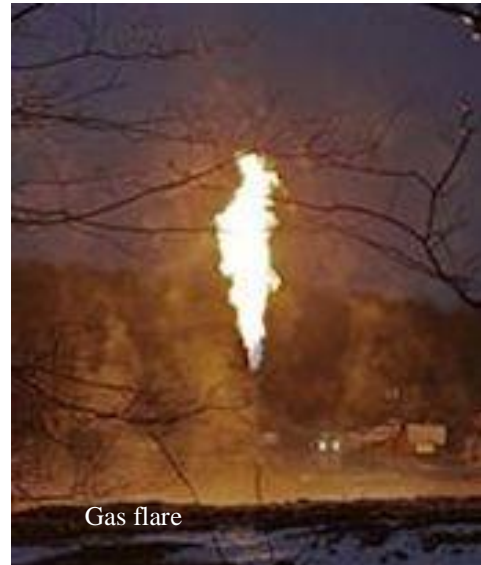
Each fracking well may consume from 2 to 8 million gallons of water. Hydraulic fracturing is exempt from the Safe Drinking Water Act. Hundreds of products containing more than 750 chemicals and components are potentially used throughout the extraction process, including more than 100 known or suspected endocrine-disrupting chemicals.<sup>1</sup>

## Widespread Air Pollution

Ozone pollution from gas fields has caused air pollution problem similar to that found in large cities. And the pollution can affect an area of up to 200 miles from the region where the gas is being extracted.<sup>2</sup>

## Fracking Waste in Landfills

Exploration and Production Wastes (E&P) are a broad category of wastes generated by the exploration and production of oil and gas. They contain toxic chemicals and can be radioactive. Some E&P wastes are considered "special" wastes; they are allowed to be disposed of in a municipal solid waste landfill with no testing required. Waste generators often mix such hazardous waste with sawdust or other substances and send them to landfills for cheap disposal. E&P wastes are exempt from regulation under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act.



## Public Lands at Risk

Over five million acres of National Forest Service lands are currently leased for oil, gas, coal, and phosphate mining operations. At any given time, the Forest Service administers operations on approximately 160,000 mining claims and manages approximately 2,600 mineral material sale contracts.<sup>3</sup> In the 1970s, nearly all eastern US national forest lands were leased for gas and oil drilling. Today, fracking is underway in national forests in Pennsylvania and Alabama, with others pending.

## Testing Slated for Western NC

The NC General Assembly has allocated \$550,000 for testing to find natural gas deposits.

<sup>1</sup> *Endocrinology*, Volume 155 Issue 3 - March 2014, Kassotis CD *et al*, ISSN 1945-7170

<sup>2</sup> TEDX, The Endocrine Disruption Exchange, <http://endocrinedisruption.org/>

<sup>3</sup> Tom Tidwell, Chief, U.S. Forest Service, Testimony before the US House Committee on Natural Resources Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources, March 20, 2012

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Presently, the mountain counties targeted for the program are Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Jackson, Macon and Swain.<sup>4</sup>

## Private Property Rights Violated

Gas can be taken from your property without your consent. This is called "forced pooling." But you have no right to know what poison is being pumped into the ground below your feet. If you live on a split estate, you are even more vulnerable, because someone else owns the mineral rights and the mineral rights trump the surface rights. There are currently no protections for landowners in place.



## Trade Secrets

The oil and gas industry can claim trade secret protection for fracking chemicals that will be transported across North Carolina highways and byways, and used on site. Impacted communities and local governments will have no right to know what chemical cocktail is being used in a fracking job.

## Emergency Personnel and Physicians Muzzled

In an accident involving fracking, first responders and medical personnel seeking information on what chemicals have been spilled, or are on fire, or that people have been exposed to must request trade secret information from a state agency. Senate Bill 786, signed into law on June 6, 2014, makes it a crime for state officials, first responders, and medical providers to disclose trade secrets to others, and even among themselves. For example, a fire chief could be prohibited from sharing critical information with their department without fear of prosecution. Medical providers can be required to sign a "gag order" before being provided with trade secreted chemicals their patient may have been exposed to.

## Fractured Communities

After visiting fracking communities, Lois Marie Gibbs, environmental justice leader at Love Canal, said, "What we witnessed were wrecked communities which mirrored the broken rock out-of-sight and underground." She blamed the boom-town phenomenon created by natural gas and other fossil fuel industries for the social ills and added, "Rising levels of crime and disease come to town with the drilling rigs." Gibbs cited an independent study of rural communities before and after hydrofracking revealed a 62% rise in gonorrhea and chlamydia, two sexually transmitted diseases.

<sup>4</sup> "State to test for natural gas deposits in WNC," *Asheville Citizen*, June 2, 2014