

ENVIRONMENT

200+ Environmental Groups Tell EPA: Correct Unsupported Claim in Fracking Report

“By dismissing fracking’s impacts on drinking water resources as not “widespread, systemic,” the EPA seriously misrepresented the findings of its underlying study.

Food & Water Watch | September 26, 2016



COMMENTS

Led by Food & Water Watch, more than 200 public interest and environmental groups—including Sierra Club, Indigenous Environmental Network, NRDC, Greenpeace, Earthjustice, League of Conservation Voters, Union of Concerned Scientists, Friends of the Earth, [350.org](#) and Clean Water Action—sent a [letter](#) to the EPA today, urging the agency to heed the recommendation of its own independent Science Advisory Board (SAB) and clarify the seemingly unsupported top-line finding of the June 2015 draft report.



Photo Credit: tkking/Shutterstock

The EPA's June 2015 draft of the study featured a dismissive and unsupported topline finding—that fracking has not led to “widespread, systemic” problems nationally, as if that should be the bar. The groups back the SAB’s recommendation that the EPA either drop the controversial language or provide a “quantitative analysis” to support it.

The letter, signed by hundreds of national, statewide and local environmental and public interest groups, representing millions of members, was sent directly to EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy. It is being sent on the heels of an [EnergyWire FOIA report](#) indicating that the Obama White House was engaged in the “messaging” for the rollout of the controversial EPA study, stating that “White House aides kept tabs on what the ‘topline messages’ would be.”

In the letter, environmental groups specifically call on the EPA to revisit its statement of findings, consistent with the SAB recommendations, and resolve the three major problems with the controversial line:

1. The EPA did not provide a sense of what the agency would have considered “widespread, systemic impacts on drinking water resources in the United States.”
2. The “widespread, systemic” line is problematic because it presumes, without discussion, that looking on a national scale, over several years, provides an appropriate metric for evaluating the significance of known impacts.
3. The “widespread, systemic” line is problematic because the EPA failed to explain adequately the impediments to arriving at quantitative estimates for the frequencies and severities of the impacts already occurring.

The letter continues:

“By dismissing fracking’s impacts on drinking water resources as not “widespread, systemic,” the EPA seriously misrepresented the findings of its underlying study. This has done the public a disservice. We feel the agency now owes it to the public—and particularly to those already impacted by “hydraulic fracturing activities”—to address these criticisms.” [The full letter can be accessed here.](#)

SIGN: Tell President Obama and Congress to Ban Fracking Nationwide

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Hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, is method of drilling for gas that injects millions of gallons of hydraulic fluids — a toxic mixture of chemicals, water and sand — into the ground releasing natural gas. This process can contaminate water sources, damage ecosystems and cause public health problems. France, Germany, Ireland and Scotland have banned fracking. **Tell President Obama and Congress to implement a federal ban on fracking.**

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