

**American Rivers • Clean Water Action • Delaware Riverkeeper Network
Earthjustice • EARTHWORKS • Environment America • Greenpeace USA
League of Conservation Voters • OMB Watch • National Wildlife Federation
Natural Resources Defense Council • Sierra Club • The Wilderness Society
Western Organization of Resource Councils**

May 25, 2010

Dear Member of the Energy and Commerce Committee:

As you work to reauthorize the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA), we ask that you support language to require public disclosure of hydraulic fracturing chemicals.

Hydraulic fracturing is an oil and natural gas production technique that involves the injection of millions of gallons of water, chemicals, and sand underground at very high pressure in order to create fractures in the underlying geology to allow more efficient production. Oil and natural gas are produced in over thirty states, and most wells use hydraulic fracturing. Because of the large volumes of hydraulic fracturing fluid used in some locations, the chemical components of fracturing fluid can amount to tens of thousands of gallons per fracturing job. Hundreds of different types of chemicals are used in fracturing operations, many of which can cause serious health problems—some are also known carcinogens.

Hydraulic fracturing has been suspected in a number of cases of drinking water contamination around the country. In some instances, residents have reported health symptoms. Communities want to know what might be in their drinking water. Some oil and gas companies support transparency in hydraulic fracturing and disclosure of the chemicals being used.

The public right-to-know about chemicals being used in communities has long-standing support in Congress. Due to property laws, hydraulic fracturing chemicals are often used right in backyards, sometimes less than 200 feet from a home or drinking water well. Hydraulic fracturing is not limited to industrial areas and is exempt from federal regulation under the Safe Drinking Water Act. Communities across the country have repeatedly asked to know about what chemicals are being used near their homes and underground sources of clean drinking water.

The proposed legislation requiring disclosure of hydraulic fracturing chemicals does not require any public disclosure of trade secrets that are proprietary. It does, however, require disclosure of this information to medical professionals or government authorities if needed for medical treatment, on a confidential basis. We are sure you can imagine that if you were ill, perhaps due to contaminants in your drinking water, you would want your doctor to have this information so you could receive proper medical treatment. It is a very reasonable request.

Requiring the disclosure of hydraulic fracturing chemicals is a sensible and responsible approach to protecting drinking water in communities throughout America. Please support language in the SDWA to ensure this disclosure.

Sincerely,

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