

## **Fracking 101**

In the constant search for new and improved energy sources a balance must be maintained between that which is available and that which is non-destructive of the environment.

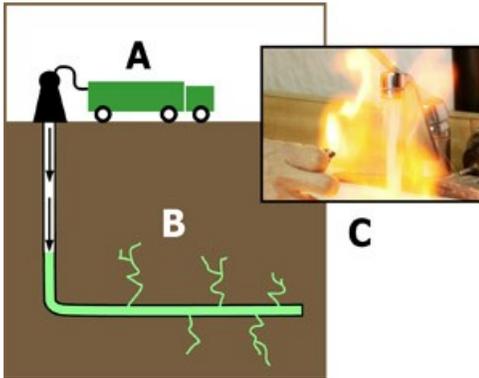
### **What is Fracking?**

Fracking (also referred to as hydraulic fracturing or hydrofracking) is a process in which a fluid is injected at high pressure into oil or methane gas deposits to fracture the rock above and release the liquid or gas below. Fracking - which uses enormous amounts of drinkable water along with toxic chemicals and which also releases radioactive materials and other hazardous substances in shale deposits – has raised significant environmental and health concerns.

### **Local Concerns**

Recently the use of fracking has spread from the western states into the mid-Atlantic. This area is home to the Marcellus Shale, a potential source of natural gas. The Marcellus Shale stretches through Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, Delaware and a part of northwestern New Jersey. Among the many possible areas to be impacted by the toxins connected with the process is the Delaware River Basin that forms the western border of most of New Jersey. The Delaware River is the longest undammed river east of the Mississippi, flowing freely from New York State through Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware to the Atlantic Ocean. The Delaware River Basin is home to the largest stretch of legally designated “Special Protection Waters” in the nation and is now targeted for 32,500 to 54,000 hydraulic fracturing wells. The Delaware Basin provides drinking water to 15,600,000 people. In *America’s Most Endangered Rivers Report: 2010 Edition*, the American Rivers advocacy group named the Delaware river the number one most at risk river, due to the threat of extensive drilling into the Marcellus Shale.

There are many questions that need to be answered before such a potential disaster is given the go ahead. Unfortunately legislation in place to protect us and the environment has been rendered useless. The 2005 Energy Policy Act has exempted the process of fracking from the Clean Water Act, the Clean Air Act, and the Safe Drinking Water Act. To this date, there has not been full disclosure on the chemicals that are used in the hydraulic fracturing process and there are 567 plus chemicals being used. Up to 70 percent of this “fracking fluid” is left in the ground.



*(A) In horizontal hydraulic fracturing, a stew of toxic chemicals and millions of gallons of water are forced deep underground to fracture bedrock and release natural gas, (B) but radioactive material and methane are sometimes released as well. Massive air and water pollution is created, including (C) some household faucets emitting flammable methane-laced water. Photo: Josh Fox, Gasland. Diagram: Gordon Frazier / FS*

### ***What can I do?***

Become informed. The following websites have helpful information:

[www.sourcewatch.org](http://www.sourcewatch.org) left side of page under Hot Topics find “fracking”

[www.delawariverkeeper.org](http://www.delawariverkeeper.org) on main page Search “fracking”

<http://action.foodandwaterwatch.org> click on Issues drop down will show “fracking”

You can view trailers and excerpts from Gasland on YouTube:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/Gaslandmovie>

You can purchase DVD through Amazon.com

The other side: If you are interested in knowing what those who defend fracking have to say visit [www.exxonmobil.com](http://www.exxonmobil.com), [www.conocophillips.com](http://www.conocophillips.com), or most oil companies. Search for “hydraulic fracturing”

### **Action**

The Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) is considering proposed regulations to allow fracking in the Delaware River Basin. The governors of New Jersey, Pennsylvania, New York, and Delaware as well as the President of the United States each have a representative on the DRBC. The proposed regulations were to be voted on this past November 21 however, the vote was postponed. There is uncertainty when they will meet. Each governor and the President have the power to stop the DRBC from setting a terrible precedent to allow fracking.

Last year Governor Christie initiated a one year moratorium on fracking in NJ. He believed then that more information was needed as to the environmental risks of the process. That information is still not forthcoming as companies refuse to clearly name all the chemicals involved and their potential effects. Governor Christie is under pressure from neighboring states as well as industry to put his support behind the proposed legislation to allow hydraulic fracking.

**Call President Obama: 202-456-1111 and NJ Governor Christie: 609-292-6000**

Ask them to use their influence to protect the Delaware River Water Basin.

