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## Hydraulic Fracturing and the Search for Answers. (/full-blog/2011/09/hydraulic-fracturing-and-search-for.html)



(<https://static.squarespace.com/static/53fe85a0e4b0516a0c4fed1a/54002444e4b0123f9872f024/5400245fe4b0123f9872f2d1/1409295455346/1000w/>)

By: Jocelyn Arlinghaus, Staff Member

Hydraulic fracturing, also known as fracking, is a method of natural gas collection that has revitalized the U.S. natural gas industry. The process involves drilling large quantities of water and chemicals into underground rock formations to release trapped natural gas.[1]

(<http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?>

blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#\_edn1) In conjunction with other advanced drilling techniques, fracking has granted access to natural gas reserves stretching from Texas to upstate New York. These reserves are estimated to meet the demand for natural gas for over a century.[2] (<http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?>

blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#\_edn2)

As a result of fracking, natural gas has become an increasingly important resource.[3]

([http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?](http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#_edn3)

[blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#\\_edn3](http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#_edn3))

However, the technique is controversial due to environmental concerns associated with its use.

[4] ([http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?](http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#_edn4)

[blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#\\_edn4](http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#_edn4)) For

example, wastewater associated with fracking can contaminate drinking water[5]

([http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?](http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#_edn5)

[blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#\\_edn5](http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#_edn5)) and the

extraction process also produces pollutants that diminish air quality.[6]

([http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?](http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#_edn6)

[blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#\\_edn6](http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#_edn6)) On the

other hand, burning natural gas produces fewer greenhouse gases than coal and many new jobs

have been created as a result of efforts to tap into this valuable resource.[7]

([http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?](http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#_edn7)

[blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#\\_edn7](http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#_edn7)) Some

experts have predicted that the United States may abandon fracking completely due to the

national attention its associated environmental concerns have generated.[8]

([http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?](http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#_edn8)

[blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#\\_edn8](http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#_edn8))However

, this would be shortsighted. The negative repercussions of fracking are cause for concern, but

extraction efforts should continue while ways to make the process safer and more

environmentally conscious are explored.

President Obama has declared that natural gas is fundamental to the energy industry in the

United States and has called for a panel to examine ways to make fracking cleaner.[9]

([http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?](http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#_edn9)

[blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#\\_edn9](http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#_edn9)) In order

to restore confidence in fracking, greater transparency between gas companies and the public is

needed.[10] ([http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?](http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#_edn10)

[blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#\\_edn10](http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#_edn10))

Activists have fought to require drilling companies to measure and record the amount of methane in water wells before and after drilling and then release the information to the public.

This would mirror the standard that applies to other industries under the Community Right to

Know Law.[11] ([http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?](http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#_edn11)

[blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#\\_edn11](http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#_edn11)) The

United States Department of Energy has also suggested that drillers should disclose the type of

chemicals used in fracking and that stricter requirements should be placed on the industry in

order to ensure that the environment is protected.[12] ([http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?](http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#_edn12)

[blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#\\_edn12](http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#_edn12))*Id.*

While the industry has resisted such requirements in the past, several drilling companies have

begun to cooperate with requests for disclosure.[13] ([http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?](http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#_edn13)

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With the threat of global warming on the rise, the United States has prioritized the effort to reduce emission of carbon dioxide and other harmful pollutants.[14]

([http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?](http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#_edn14)

[blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#\\_edn14](http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#_edn14))

Increased use of natural gas and the discovery of new and ever more efficient methods of collecting it have fueled predictions that gas will be the key source of electricity for the next 25

years.[15] ([http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?](http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#_edn15)

[blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#\\_edn15](http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#_edn15))

Natural gas is relatively inexpensive and more environmentally friendly than both coal and the

gasoline that powers our vehicles.[16] (<http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?>

blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#\_edn16)  
Experts should continue to search for ways to address the environmental concerns raised by the hydraulic fracturing process.

[1] ([http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#\\_ednref1](http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#_ednref1)) Tom Kenworthy, Daniel J. Weiss, Lisbeth Kaufman, & Christina C. DiPasquale, *Drilling Down on Fracking Concerns*, Center for American Progress (Mar. 21, 2011), *available at* [http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2011/03/fracking\\_concerns.html](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2011/03/fracking_concerns.html) ([http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2011/03/fracking\\_concerns.html](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2011/03/fracking_concerns.html)).

[2] ([http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#\\_ednref2](http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#_ednref2)) *Id.*

[3] ([http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#\\_ednref3](http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#_ednref3)) *Id.*

[4] ([http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#\\_ednref4](http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#_ednref4)) *Id.*

[5] ([http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#\\_ednref5](http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#_ednref5)) *Id.*

[6] ([http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#\\_ednref6](http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#_ednref6)) *Id.*

[7] ([http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#\\_ednref7](http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#_ednref7)) *Id.*

[8] ([http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#\\_ednref8](http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#_ednref8)) *Id.*

[9] ([http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#\\_ednref9](http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#_ednref9)) Jeff Brady, *Energy Panel Wants Answers on Gas 'Fracking'*, National Public Radio (Aug. 11, 2011), *available at* <http://www.npr.org/2011/08/11/139508166/energy-panel-wants-answers-on-gas-fracking> (<http://www.npr.org/2011/08/11/139508166/energy-panel-wants-answers-on-gas-fracking>).

[10] ([http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#\\_ednref10](http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#_ednref10)) *Id.*

[11] ([http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#\\_ednref11](http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#_ednref11)) *Id.*

[12] ([http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#\\_ednref12](http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#_ednref12)) *Id.*

[13] ([http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#\\_ednref13](http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#_ednref13)) Tom Kenworthy, Daniel J. Weiss, Lisbeth Kaufman, & Christina C. DiPasquale, *Drilling Down on Fracking Concerns*, Center for American Progress (Mar. 21, 2011), *available at* [http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2011/03/fracking\\_concerns.html](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2011/03/fracking_concerns.html) ([http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2011/03/fracking\\_concerns.html](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2011/03/fracking_concerns.html)).

[14] ([http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#\\_ednref14](http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#_ednref14)) *Id.*

[15] ([http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#\\_ednref15](http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#_ednref15)) *Id.*

[16] ([http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#\\_ednref16](http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=7249068815564993342&from=pencil#_ednref16)) *Id.*

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