

## Illinois People's Action Analysis of HB2615

Horizontal hydraulic fracturing (fracking) may be coming to Illinois. Fracking is the process injecting millions of gallons of liquid into underground shale at high pressure to fracture the rock and release oil or natural gas. The liquid is almost always fresh water which, once used, is lost forever and which is combined with silica sand and a variety of chemicals, many of which are toxic, to make the liquid slicker.

There is a bill (HB2615) in the Illinois House that was crafted behind closed doors with the oil and gas industry and representatives from some big environmental groups. The result is a bill that is being touted as the "strictest fracking law in the country." The problem with this claim is that "strict" is not synonymous with "safe" and HB2615 is neither strict nor safe. The EPA is currently conducting a nationwide study on the effects of fracking. New York has decided to wait on fracking there until the study is complete. Shouldn't we also wait until this study is complete before we rush to frack Illinois?

On the most important issues, HB2615 remains silent or gives the store away." Here is a list of why you should be concerned about the passage of this bill:

- **Setbacks-** The right to frack within 301 feet of lakes, like Lake Bloomington, Lake Evergreen, Peoria Lake, Lake Springfield, or Lake Decatur, or 501 feet of water wells (best practice dictates at least a distance of 3,300 feet) The right to frack within 501 feet of residences, churches, schools, etc.
- **Water usage-** the bill requires the industry to identify its water sources but does NOT give local or state governments the authority to limit that usage, not even during a drought. (For example, it would take only 73 wells to completely drain Lake Bloomington. Other central Illinois lakes aren't far behind and, if the New Albany shale pans out, we can anticipate 10,000 wells in Illinois.)
- **Radioactivity-** No testing of radioactivity in the produced water (only in flowback where it is unlikely to be present), along with the right to flush radioactivity down Class II injection wells, which is presently prohibited under Illinois law;
- **Unlimited venting of raw methane during well completion-** Contrary to industry assertions, burning frack gas for energy is not cleaner than burning coal. While fracking emits less carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) it emits CH<sub>4</sub>, a natural gas that is 25 times more potent than carbon dioxide as a greenhouse gas.
- **Vertical Setbacks-** No minimum vertical separation distance, i.e., the distance between groundwater and the top of the shale strata -- which is crucial in the shallow New Albany Formation;
- **Storage-** The right to "temporarily" use open pit ponds to store flowback water;

- **Proprietary secrets allowed**- The right of fracking companies to NOT disclose chemicals that are proprietary;
- **Fracking in seismic zones**- No ban on fracking in seismically active areas;
- **Abandoned wells**- No provisions for the thousands of inactive or MIA oil wells that aren't located on plat maps -- these are "fast paths" for polluting groundwater
- **Local Control**- Removal of local control from counties with regard to the permitting process. Fracking permits will be issued by IDNR; counties can formally object to a permit but are not given authority to deny permits or otherwise determine further setbacks, regulate water usage, or take the steps they deem necessary to protect the residents within their jurisdictions.

**The Jobs Claim:** The industry is trying to rapidly move this bill through the General Assembly with promises that fracking will create jobs and revenue for Illinois. The jobs claims have been drastically inflated. While the industry says fracking will create 125 jobs per well, an independent study using Bureau of Labor Statistics data says the true number is 1.7 jobs per well. Furthermore, in a public meeting in November 2012, State Senator Bill Brady said, "no amount of economic development is worth destroying Illinois." We agree.

**Energy Independence:** The industry is also advertising fracking as a path toward energy independence for America. But the newly fracked gas is destined for foreign ports like Japan, which is willing to pay six times more for the gas than Americans currently pay. The industry isn't really interested in American energy independence. They are interested in profit.

These are just a few indications of the industry's willingness to try to dupe the public. Don't be duped.

Fracking is NOT inevitable in Illinois. Join Illinois People's Action in standing up to fracking in Illinois. To find out how to become more involved, call IPA at (309) 827-9627.