Hydraulic fracturing, or “fracking” is a violent process that shoots millions of gallons of pressurized, chemical-laced water deep into the earth to release hard-to-reach deposits of natural gas, causing polluted air water and land. Currently, fracking isn’t allowed in Maryland, but the dangerous practice could soon begin in western Maryland.

To make things worse, new gas plants wouldn’t even produce gas for Marylanders—if the moratorium is lifted, pipelines that were used to import gas into Maryland will instead be used to export liquefied natural gas (LNG) from these newly built gas plants.1 Lifting the moratorium is a lose-lose situation for Marylanders—our land, water and air become polluted and the energy moves overseas.

This is why the Sierra Club, and 75 public health, environmental and community organizations, don’t support fracking in Maryland. The costs are too high. We urge the legislature to enact an extended moratorium to take the proper time to assess the long-term health and environmental risks before taking irreversible action.

**WHAT WOULD THE BILL DO?**

- Enact an 8 year moratorium prohibiting Maryland Department of the Environment to issue any new permits for drilling permits.
- Provide sufficient time for the completion of health impact studies and an assessment of the environmental impacts, including assessment of net-carbon emissions.
- Require that a panel of public health, engineering and scientific experts convene to review studies and material, and provide an assessment of current risks and manage option to the General Assembly
- Ensure that the panel of experts has sufficient time and resources to study and present independent recommendations.

**Why is fracking so bad? Fracking...**

**CONTRIBUTES TO CLIMATE CHANGE:**

Although advertised as a clean energy, natural gas is anything but. In fact, natural gas is a major threat to our climate. Total greenhouse gas emissions from natural gas are nearly identical to coal, once methane leakage is taken into account. And, even without accounting for methane emissions, a recent International Energy Agency (IEA) study concluded that a global shift away from coal to natural gas would do little to get us off the path to climate catastrophe. While switching completely to natural gas showed better results than adding more coal to the energy mix, IEA's analysis shows that the atmosphere would still reach 650 parts per million of CO₂ between 2020 and 2060, warming the Earth at least 3.5 degrees Celsius.

**MARYLAND NEEDS A FRACKING MORATORIUM**

Support the “Protect our Health and Communities Act”, SB409, HB 449
POLLUTES OUR AIR:
Because of air quality's potential for immediate health effects, it is viewed as one of the greatest health concerns, but fracking stands to impair it. Air pollution is generated at the well site by major truck traffic, diesel generators, gas venting, gas flaring, and leakage of air pollutants. The density of wells in a fracked gas field leads to hundreds of sources of air pollution. Additionally, benzene and formaldehyde, known carcinogens, have been detected at high levels at fracking wells, and even above safe levels several hundred feet away.2

CONTAMINATES OUR WATER:
Each natural gas well requires millions of gallons of water. On average, 10 to 20 percent of the produced water (water, sand, and chemicals) is returned to the surface and must be disposed of, either by injection or surface treatment and discharge into rivers. Most of the produced water stays below ground, where it becomes increasingly toxic. But, all too often, failed well casings lead to irreversible contamination of underground aquifers — the lifeblood of our homes, farms, and fisheries. A 2011 study found that private drinking-water wells had on average methane levels 17 times higher up to a km from drilling sites, compared to those in non-drilling sites.3

To make matters worse, there are no known remediation technologies when an aquifer is poisoned. And, weak federal legislation has allowed companies to keep fracking chemicals and formulas secret, so communities and clinicians do not know what exactly they have been exposed to.

Plus, naturally occurring radioactive particles, such as radium, barium, and radon, may be brought to the surface in fracking wastewater. Wastewater tests in Pennsylvania and New York found levels 3,600 times more radioactive than federal limits for drinking water and 300 times more radioactive than Nuclear Regulatory Agency limits for nuclear plant discharge.4

IMPACTS OUR FOOD SUPPLY:
Fracking doesn’t just affect our health through air and water pollution, but our food supply too. Cattle that die from wastewater poisoning in Pennsylvania are sent to slaughter houses without testing5 and dairy from cattle living near drilling sites is not tested before it hits the market.

DAMAGES OUR LAND:
There is no prohibition against fracking on public lands. Fracking leads to clear-cutting, development of new roads, noise and light pollution, all of which damages natural beauty and can have detrimental effects on wildlife. We don’t want to risk Maryland’s great open spaces and natural beauty to dirty energy expansion.

Tell your legislator to support the “Protect our Health and Communities Act”, SB409, HB 449

ENDNOTES