

Dear Senator/Representative:

You constituents in Ohio urge you to co-sponsor S. 1215/H.R. 2766, the **Fracturing Responsibility and Awareness of Chemicals (FRAC) Act**. This important legislation would repeal an exemption in the Safe Drinking Water Act for an oil and gas technique called hydraulic fracturing. It would also require public disclosure of the chemicals used in hydraulic fracturing fluids. This is most important for Ohio since our current state law allows for gas wells to be placed as close as 100ft from homes and even closer to water sources.

Oil and gas production is present in 34 states, and a consistent national standard is needed for this practice. Hydraulic fracturing involves the injection of fluids into oil or gas wells at very high pressure in order to crack open the underground formation and allow oil or gas to flow out more easily. These fluids often contain toxic chemicals, some of which remain underground. The pressure places stress on the oil or gas well and can lead to unpredictable consequences such as the house explosion and underground aquifer contamination that occurred in Bainbridge Twp in 2007. Reports of drinking water contamination have also come from Colorado, Texas, Arkansas, Pennsylvania, and Alabama, among others.

While states regulate oil and gas production, state rules vary widely and a federal floor is needed. As stated in a recent study from the Hastings College of the Law, "...many of the state regulatory schemes date from earlier waves of resource extraction, and have not kept pace with changed technologies, nor with a deepening concern for public health and the environment." For example, a recent report issued by the Ground Water Protection Council found that some states do not require a well's surface casing to be set through the deepest ground water zone.

In 2005, Congress exempted hydraulic fracturing from the SDWA to the benefit of Halliburton and other oil and gas companies. It is time to close the Halliburton Loophole and hold the oil and gas production industry to the same standards as any other industry. Most states have primacy for regulating underground injection and would therefore have considerable flexibility under this legislation to tailor their rules to local conditions.

The right balance needs to be established between oil and gas development and protection of our precious natural resources. Instead of that balance, however, provisions of some of our most critical federal environmental laws have exemptions for oil and gas production. In addition to the Safe Drinking Water Act, there are loopholes in the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, and Resource Conservation and Recovery Act. These loopholes should be closed.

We hope you will co-sponsor this sensible and important legislation to protect our drinking water.