Food & Water Watch • 1028 SE Water Avenue, Suite 245 • Portland, OR 97214
T +971.266.4528 • F +971.266.4532 • foodandwaterwatch.org

HB-2711 - Hydraulic Fracturing - Moratorium
Position: FAVORABLE
Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
May 22, 2017

Dear Chairman Dembrow and Committee Members:

On behalf of Food & Water Watch's 32,000 members and supporters in Oregon we urge support on HB-2711 which will place a moratorium on fracking in Oregon until 2026.

I'm proud to work for an organization calling for a ban on fracking — the first national organization to do so.

Our members and supporters are active in movements resisting fracking and its impacts in communities around the country. We are up against much more than the oil and gas industry. Global financial institutions are betting hundreds of billions of dollars on new infrastructure to support the oil and gas industry's vision of maximizing oil and gas production. In light of climate science alone, this is short-sighted.

As you know fracking brings many risks to our public health, our local economies, and our environment. Since this committee led the push for a moratorium in the previous session, the evidence of these risks has continued to mount.

A paramount concern regarding fracking is the health of people living and working in the vicinity of well sites and other infrastructure to support fracking. Recent research speaks to the threats these people face:

- Researchers at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and collaborating institutions published a study in August 2016 which analyzed responses to questionnaires received from more than 7,000 adult primary care patients in central and northern Pennsylvania, and found statistically significant associations between proximity to active fracking operations and various combinations of migraine headaches, chronic rhinosinusitis and fatigue symptoms.
- Another study from Johns Hopkins, published in July 2016, analyzed medical records of more than 35,000 asthma patients, ages five to 90 years old, and found a statistically significant association between proximity to active fracking operations and mild to severe asthma exacerbations.
- An earlier October 2015 study also led by researchers at the Johns Hopkins found that expectant mothers living near heavy fracking in Pennsylvania were significantly more likely to experience a high-risk pregnancy or give birth prematurely.
- Research in northeast Pennsylvania, released in July 2015, found a correlation between the density of fracking wells and the rate at which local residents were admitted to the hospital.
- And in June 2015, University of Maryland researchers published evidence that emissions from fracking in West Virginia and Pennsylvania were impacting air quality as far away as Baltimore and Washington DC.

Many of the concerns about fracking surround the risks and harms to people's drinking water supplies. Briefly:

- Fracking perforates the subsurface, with around 10 wells per square mile, for miles around. The concrete and steel pipes — vertical pipelines — age and degrade. Fracking puts aquifers at risk for generations by creating these new pathways through which contaminants may flow over long periods of time— contaminants including the chemicals injected to drill the well, radioactive brines and methane and other hydrocarbon gases.

- Fracking generates toxic and even radioactive waste, the disposal of which causes earthquakes and additional drinking water problems.
- Fracking also leads to thousands of accidents, leaks and spills each year that threaten public health and safety and risk rivers, streams and shallow aquifers. Industry has been very successful in carving out loopholes to prevent data on the actual impacts after these spills form being known.
- Each fracked well consumes millions of gallons of water, competing with farmers for often increasingly scarce local water supplies.

Food & Water Watch's *Urgent Case to Ban Fracking* provides a synthesis of the science surrounding fracking's impacts and it can be found on our website www.foodandwaterwatch.org. More recently, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency finalized its assessments of fracking's impacts drinking water resources.[i]

There are also additional impacts beyond on drinking water resources:

- Fracking dumps hazardous pollutants into the air above well-sites and other infrastructure, at the expense of local communities, families and farms.
- Fracking fragments forests and mars landscapes with new roads, new well sites and new pipelines and other infrastructure, with inevitable failures leading to methane leaks and even pipeline explosions.
- Fracking has turned homes into explosive hazards by contaminating water wells with methane and other harmful hydrocarbon gases, including volatile organic compounds such as benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene and xylenes (BTEX).
- More broadly, fracking threatens the climate on which we all depend by dumping carbon dioxide and methane into the atmosphere, and by locking in future climate pollution with each new infrastructure project.

Fracking is simply indefensible, in light of the impacts on air, water and health in targeted communities. The message of climate science is clear — we must maximize what we keep in the ground instead. The surest way to do that here in Oregon is pass HB 2711.

Sincerely,

Julia DeGraw
Senior Northwest Organizer
Food & Water Watch

[i] U.S. EPA. Hydraulic Fracturing for Oil and Gas: Impacts from the Hydraulic Fracturing Water Cycle on Drinking Water Resources in the United States (Final Report). U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Washington, DC, EPA/600/R-16/236F, 2016. Executive Summary here: https://cfpub.epa.gov/ncea/hfstudy/recordisplay.cfm?deid=332990