

RESOLUTION OPPOSING AZ UTILITIES IMPORTING HYDRAULICALLY FRACTURED NATURAL GAS

WHEREAS, the practice of extraction of natural gas by the process of hydraulic fracturing, commonly referred to as "fracking," is: 1) growing rapidly in areas of the U.S. that have geological shale formations, and 2) uses extraordinary volumes of water to inject toxic drilling and fracturing fluids deep underground and then withdrawn, may contaminate underground aquifers and surface waters, often in populated areas; and

WHEREAS, the chemicals used in fracking are very toxic to human health and very often undisclosed and not subject to environmental regulatory reporting and monitoring because the 2005 Energy Policy Act exempted the natural gas industry from seven major federal laws designed to protect public health, including the Safe Drinking Water and Clean Air Acts. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) still does not regulate the injection of fracturing fluids and the industry is not required to disclose chemicals it considers to be proprietary; and

WHEREAS, the process of hydraulic fracturing releases a significant amount of methane gas from beneath shale deposits and this methane gas is 72 times more potent than carbon dioxide as a greenhouse gas that contributes to global warming over the first 20 years after release; and

WHEREAS, Public Health studies conducted of populations living near fracking operations show that sub-chronic exposures to air pollutants, including volatile organic compounds (VOCs), during well completions pose the greatest respiratory and cancer risks, with benzene being the major contributor to cumulative cancer risks; and

WHEREAS, in the face of more stringent regulatory requirements for the combustion of coal in the production of electricity and with the decrease in the cost of natural gas, public and private utilities are rapidly moving toward the expansion of natural gas burning facilities to replace coal burning. The state of Arizona is importing natural gas from other locations, many of which acquire the gas through hydraulic fracturing processes.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Arizona Democratic Party supports a moratorium on, and a mandate that, Arizona utilities acquire natural gas from resources that do not use hydraulic extraction processes; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Arizona Democratic Party supports regulations that require the oil and gas industry to fully disclose all chemicals used in the processes of hydraulic fracturing, the amount of waste generated and the methods of disposal of such waste.

SOURCES:

Hydraulic Fracturing: How Great is the Risk to Health, PSRs online “Environmental Health Policy Institute”, June 2012

Health Concerns in the Era of Gas Drilling: A Basic Toolkit for Healthcare Providers, Southwest Pennsylvania Environmental Health Project. n.d.

The Health Effects of Shale Gas Development, Physicians, Scientists and Engineers for Healthy Energy. n.d.

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