



SB 0878 TALKING POINTS

Below is a list of potential and basic talking points for testimony. Many of them overlap as strong counter arguments to fracking. See the closing link for additional information.

HEALTH

Studies link natural gas development to low birth weights, bloody noses, asthma, lymphoma, and childhood leukemia. The health issues are broad and attributed to ongoing gas emissions, chemicals used to extract the gas, and diesel exhaust from the heavy equipment needed during development. Following development, gas emissions from well heads is a permanent and persistent health risk. Citizens requested “flaring” notifications in Accident, which housed the underground gas storage facility. The practice releases dense emissions that can be harmful. The notifications give residents time to close their homes to the emissions.

ECONOMICS

The tourism economy, vacation rentals, and real estate around Deep Creek Lake generate over 60 percent of the county’s tax base. The county’s appeal will be diminished by gas development and industrialization. The Garrett County Chamber of Commerce studied the real estate value losses to the five percent severance tax on fracking showed a 20-year loss of \$133 million.

Mitigation for damaged roads could put a strain on the \$17 million annual budget for Garrett County roads maintenance. Special events like Art & Wine, and Autumn Glory Festivals could be greatly disrupted by industrial traffic.

Shortage of housing can result from temporary workers requiring rentals and hotel rooms. Should there be a lack of housing, “man camps” may be the only solution. This temporary housing is unsightly and often located on roadsides.

ENVIRONMENT

Gas drilling in karst topography, distinct for Garrett County, presents significant challenges due to the presence of large, interconnected underground cavities which can lead to issues like sudden loss of drilling fluid, potential for gas blowouts, and contamination of groundwater, making it a high-risk operation requiring specialized techniques and careful geological mapping to mitigate hazards; essentially, drilling in karst can be extremely dangerous

because of the unpredictable nature of the rock formations with large open spaces and channels that can easily swallow drilling fluids and potentially cause well blowouts.

Above ground, emissions from gas wells pose numerous environmental problems through the release of carbon dioxide. Gas emissions also include pollutants like nitrogen oxides, particulate matter, and volatile organic compounds which can contribute to smog and Respiratory health issues. Wildlife can co-mingle with well sites placing them near contaminants that can make them unsafe to hunt for food.

Polluted aquifers can infiltrate drinking water sources and streams, contaminating aquatic life and ecosystems.

WATER CONSUMPTION

The original estimate was that Garrett County would drill 438 wells by 2025, requiring 3.5 billion gallons of water will be removed from Garrett County's resources. The water is not reusable and will need to be disposed of. It is uncertain where disposals would occur. Common practice is drilling injection wells, forcing the waste water back underground. A chemical cocktail is added to fracking water making it toxic and a potential contaminate for aquifers. The Wolman Report was never completed which studied the availability of water in Maryland. Garrett County was not included in the report, leaving a gap in knowledge about available water.

PROPERTY VALUES

Studies show that homes within close proximity to gas wells experience 20% or more devaluation in sales value. This negative effect is driven by the stigma created by water well contamination issues. Other things, in addition to this stigma, can decrease property values. Noise, dust and truck during well construction, road damage, and physical changes in the landscape can all negatively impact property values in communities identified with fracking.

LEASE AGREEMENTS & MINERAL RIGHTS

When minerals are developed, the owners of the mineral property stand to benefit. Others who do not own the minerals, such as surface owners or neighbors, are not likely to directly gain. While surface owners or neighbors may be able to profit from mineral development by supplying other supporting services, the value of the minerals will be collected by the owner and developer. Conflict between mineral owners and non-mineral owners can arise with any type of mineral. There can also be conflicts between mineral owners.

SAFETY

Gas development has shown increases in domestic violence, sexual abuse, child abuse, alcoholism, traffic accidents and increased need for police patrols in hot spots. School buses and emergency vehicles can be disrupted during development due to high volumes of traffic.

All One-Pagers

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