

No Fracking Way!

By Jackson Geddings

In 2014, Pat McCrory, North Carolina's Governor, Lifted the state's ban on fracking, making it legal for the Mining and Energy Commission to issue fracking permits as early as 2015. This opens the door to fracking throughout the state of North Carolina, allowing companies like Duke Energy, General Electric, and Piedmont Natural Gas access to shale drilling, which until now was never available.

Hydraulic fracturing, or "fracking" is the process of extracting natural gas from shale rocks deep within the Earth. New advancements in drilling technology, such as hydraulic fracturing, has make it possible to extract natural gas from shale that was once unreachable with conventional oil drilling.

Fracking is a very disputed topic with numerous pros and cons. In a recent interview with Craig DeBrew, of the District Manager of Government and Community Relations for Duke Energy, I asked about the benefits of fracking. He informed that "Fracking [has] unlocked reserves of natural gas. My impression of fracking, some fifteen years ago was that the supply of fracking was lower, and now it's [become] more accessible." Fracking has also had major effects on the economy as well. As of 2012, across all 50 states, the industry supported 2/1 million jobs, and is estimated to be at 3.9 million by 2025. Between 2007-2013, consumer gas bills have dropped by \$13 billion per year as a result of increased fracking, adding up to \$200 per year for gas consuming households. As a results, fracking has increased the amount of jobs available and significantly lowered consumer gas bills.

Despite these economic advantages, there are also numerous environmental drawbacks due to hydraulic fracturing, such as the threat to human and wildlife health. First of all, research has shown that fracking contaminated drinking water. In numerous places across the country, people have reported their tap water turning bubbly and flammable, due to an increased level of methane in groundwater supplies. More than 15 million Americans have a fracking operation within a mile of their house, which can be extremely dangerous, not only because it impacts the local water sources, but also because of well explosions, which are extremely dangerous, not only because it impacts the local water sources, but also because of well explosions, which are extremely hazardous to surrounding areas. Since fracking wells drill though sands of seismic activity rose steadily to approximately 100 earthquakes annually, with 188 in 2011 along, when shale gas and other unconventional energy sources began to grow

starting in 2001.

As of right now, fracking remains on hold in North Carolina. One of the main reasons is because of the success of a local lawsuit that argues the creations of the Mining and Energy Commission (MEC), accusing them of violating separation powers. Even so, there are many other options into getting energy, such as renewable energy, which has far less negative consequences than fracking. In the same interview with Craig DeBrew, I asked about the types of renewable energy that Duke Energy supplies us with, and he informed me that “We provide with solar [photo voltaic]. Somewhere near where we are now [Tryon, NC], Duke Energy is building a new solar plant in partnership with Google [A 61-megwatt solar project will be constructed in Rutherford County in Duke Energy Carolinas’ service territory, according to Duke Energy’s website]. We also use landfill gas [to provide energy]. There’s one [a plant] in Buncombe county.”

There are many things that you, as a person, can do towards not using energy from this source. By generating your own energy, and supporting green power, we can cut down on the amount of shale oil while still being environmentally friendly. You can fight toward ending fracking along with other communities, by standing up to this powerful industry, and passing bans and limits, and also urge organizations, like EPA and local grassroots organizations like Mountain True, who informs the public about the recent ongoing issue of fracking, to enforce our nation’s environmental laws.

Even through fracking does benefit communities by providing jobs and cheaper energy, the long-term effects far outweigh the short term fix. If we can work together as communities, to fight against ending fracking one and for all, we can make North Carolina, and the rest of the United States a more environmental healthy place, for generations to come.