



Feds drill deeper into fracking fray

Tuesday, November 16, 2010 at 11:58 AM by jenniferdrouhy in [Drilling](#), [General](#), [Natural gas](#), [Politics and Policy](#), [regulation](#)

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The federal government has taken a back seat to states when it comes to regulating hydraulic fracturing, the controversial drilling technique used to unlock natural gas from shale rock nationwide.

Although that arrangement is endorsed by gas producers, some on Capitol Hill and in the Obama administration want to change the scenario and give the Interior Department and Environmental Protection Agency more say over the hydraulically fractured wells.

The Environmental Protection Agency is about to launch a congressionally mandated study of the process and [just subpoenaed Halliburton for more information on the chemical components](#) of its hydraulic fracturing fluids after the energy giant refused to provide the information voluntarily. Democrats on the House Energy and Commerce Committee have asked eight energy companies to shed more light on the ingredients in their chemical cocktails.

Now, the Interior Department is joining the fray, with a planned forum on the issue Nov. 30. The event in Washington will include yet-unnamed officials from state governments, administration leaders, industry representatives and environmentalists.

Although the EPA's recent actions have been broad, the Interior's focus is on the use of hydraulic fracturing to extract gas from public lands.

An Interior Department announcement on the forum noted that in his post-election news conference Nov. 3, President Barack Obama "reiterated his commitment to the development of natural gas resources."

According to the announcement: "The Department of the Interior shares that commitment and wants to ensure that natural gas is developed in a safe and environmentally sustainable manner so that the U.S. can fully realize the economic, security, and environmental benefits of this important energy resource."

In hydraulic fracturing, energy producers inject fluids deep underground and under high pressure to break up shale rock and produce natural gas. The technique, now regulated at the state level, [has been criticized by some environmentalists](#) who worry it could introduce harmful chemicals into water supplies. [Industry officials insist hydraulic fracturing can be done safely and delivers an economic boost](#) to landowners in shale plays.



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LanceBoyle

November 16, 2010, 1:02 PM

When the EPA and Interior get involved, it is just about the same as a frivolous lawsuit. There is no merit on their side from the get-go, but there will be studies and blue-ribbon panels and much gesturing and bloviating. Probably some

Its pure obstructionism. They are looking for any reason to stop development of fossil fuels.

I try to tell people I know, that this is going to cost them at the gasoline pump and they just claim that they oil market is manipulated and there's plenty of oil.

I swear, they will not know what hit them.

bigdeal

November 16, 2010, 2:16 PM

Fracking is a completion technique. Please show that you know something about the oilfield.

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