



Perry says Obama administration is trying to 'scare people' on gas fracking

By Ben Geman - 08/16/11 01:03 PM ET

New GOP White House hopeful Rick Perry is coming out swinging against Obama administration policies on the controversial natural-gas drilling method called hydraulic fracturing.

“You have this administration talking about stopping hydraulic fracking, trying to scare people, and saying that hydraulic fracking somehow or other is going to damage the groundwater, and so we’ve got to stop this,” Perry, the Texas governor, said Monday at a campaign stop in Iowa.

The blog Think Progress, which is part of the liberal Center for American Progress Action Fund, [posted video of Perry’s campaign remarks](#) Tuesday.

Obama administration officials say they support development of gas from shale formations, which is enabled by the technique dubbed “fracking.” But the administration is also taking steps to boost oversight amid fears of groundwater contamination and increased air pollution.

Fracking involves high-pressure injections of chemicals, water and sand to break apart rock formations and enable trapped gas to flow.

The Environmental Protection Agency recently [proposed new air-pollution standards](#) for oil-and-gas operations, while EPA is also conducting a major study of how fracking could affect water supplies.

The Texas governor said there’s potential for the natural-gas development boom that’s under way in Texas, Pennsylvania and other states to reach Iowa.

“There may be copious amounts of natural gas down there. Because the Eagle Ford in south Texas — no one knew it was there until four or five years ago. There are new technologies finding new ways to bring this energy source. And we need to be ... talking about ways to make America as independent energy-wise as we can,” Perry said.

Perry, echoing the gas industry’s defense of the fracking’s safety record, said, “not one time that I’m aware of has hydraulic fracking impacted groundwater.”

But environmentalists say there are major risks as development booms. They argue there is [suspected contamination](#) from fracking chemicals already and that safeguards are inadequate.

The Environmental Working Group recently [released](#) a 1987 EPA study, disputed by the gas industry, in which EPA documented a case of fracturing fluids contaminating well water in West Virginia.

An Energy Department advisory panel last week [unveiled a report](#) that's bullish on fracking as a way to unlock a major domestic energy source. The report, however, calls for increased monitoring and safeguards while steering clear of specific regulatory recommendations.

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