


Scientists to consider EPA plan to study hydraulic fracturing

An independent panel of scientists, not involving any from Oklahoma's universities, will review the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's plan to study the potential impact of hydraulic fracturing.

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The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's plan to study the potential effect of hydraulic fracturing is headed to a 22-member panel of independent scientists, the agency announced Tuesday.

The panel, headed by Carnegie Mellon University professor David A. Dzombak, will review the plan next month, with insight from the public and other parties. None of the panelists are from Oklahoma universities, although two are from Texas and one from Kansas.

EPA's plan will be revised after the agency's Science Advisory Board submits its insight.

EPA expects to complete its initial research and study findings on hydraulic fracturing by the end of 2012.

Industry officials maintain the practice used to extract oil and natural gas from underground rock formations is safe.

“Our guys are and will continue to be supportive of a study approach that's based on the science, true to its original intent and scope, and eager to incorporate the experience and expertise of folks on the ground who have been regulating this technology for more than 60 years,” said Chris Tucker, spokesman for industry group Energy in Depth. “We don't believe that's an unreasonable standard.

“But at first blush, this document doesn't appear to definitively say whether it's an approach EPA will ultimately take.”

EPA's science panel intends to reveal the study plan March 7-8.



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