



Legislation Text

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INTRODUCTORY*

CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL R
(Resolution)

Introduced by: Councilmember Henry

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning **In Support of State Legislation - Hydraulic Fracking Moratorium**

FOR the purpose of supporting the passage of the Maryland Hydraulic Fracturing Moratorium and Right to Know Act of 2013 to place a moratorium on hydraulic fracturing in Maryland until such time as the General Assembly has received the risk assessments on the potential impacts of fracking that are mandated by the Governor's Executive Order 01.01.2011.11, and after such additional criteria for lifting the moratorium as the General Assembly may require have also been met.

Recitals

Hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, is a method of drilling for natural gas that corporations want to use to extract natural gas in Western Maryland.

Gas companies are using fracking to exploit the Marcellus Shale, an underground rock formation that spans from New York to the panhandle of Virginia, including areas in Western Maryland in Garrett County. The Marcellus Shale contains tightly compacted deposits of natural gas in rock layers thousands of feet below the earth's surface, although there are other, deeper shale layers spread across Maryland containing natural gas. While not technologically accessible at the present time, advances in technology could make these additional shale layers attractive for fracking in the future, potentially bringing fracking all over the state, including areas in closer proximity to the city of Baltimore.

Fracking involves injecting a mixture of water, sand, and toxic chemicals at high pressures deep underground to blast apart the rock and release the gas. Chemicals used in the process include benzene, xylene and toluene, which are known carcinogens, as well as other chemicals not disclosed by the industry.

In parts of the country where fracking is already taking place, families have found high levels of methane in their drinking water and have documented cases of being able to set their tap water on fire.

In addition, the fracking process results in emissions of methane, a potent greenhouse gas. Upon combustion, natural gas also emits carbon dioxide. When accounting for the full life-cycle of emissions, the planet-warming footprint of fracked natural gas could be up to two times greater than the footprint of coal over a 20-year period.

As an urban center, and a port city, Baltimore has high potential for being heavily impacted by climate change.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE, That the Council supports the passage of the Maryland Hydraulic Fracturing Moratorium and Right to Know Act of 2013 to place a moratorium on hydraulic fracturing in Maryland until such time as the General Assembly has received the risk assessments on the potential impacts of fracking that are mandated by the Governor's Executive Order 01.01.2011.11, and after such additional criteria for lifting the moratorium as the General Assembly may require have also been met.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Honorable Chairs and Members of the Baltimore City House and Senate Delegations to the Maryland General Assembly, the Mayor, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.

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