

May 24, 2010

Dear Senator:

As people of faith, who are called to protect God's Creation and care for our neighbor, we are writing to urge you to fully fund the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) proposed study of the impacts of hydraulic fracturing on water resources, as included in the President's FY2011 budget request.

Water is a precious gift of God, supporting life but also playing a critical role in the spiritual lives of people of faith. We are called to be good stewards of water resources for our communities and for all Creation.

The expanded use of hydraulic fracturing to extract natural gas from underground rock formations potentially pose a threat to drinking water resources and is of concern to a growing number of communities. The process uses undisclosed chemicals, in combination with sand and water, to break up and force gas from rock formations. Nearby aquifers may be harmed in the process, and drinking water contamination has been found in communities where hydraulic fracturing is in use in several states, including Colorado, Texas, Wyoming, Pennsylvania, Ohio and New York. In addition, more hydraulic fracturing is proposed in Arkansas, North Carolina, and Utah.

We strongly support the EPA's request for an additional \$4.3 million to complete a comprehensive study of the impacts of hydraulic fracturing on fresh water resources that serve communities around the country, particularly its effects on drinking water. This study occurs at a critical point, as the practice of hydraulic fracturing is expanding rapidly to meet growing demand for natural gas and as state and local governments are struggling to deal with the impacts of the practice on drinking water supplies and the need to provide safeguards while meeting the increased need for energy.

Finally, the water that is used for the fracturing of sub-surface rock appears to be contaminated with the chemicals and sand that are added and therefore must be treated as wastewater and disposed of in a proper manner. Currently, this waste water is simply dumped into rural treatment facilities that were not built to treat this type of wastewater which leaves communities and families susceptible to contamination.

As we have seen with the recent spill in the Gulf of Mexico and the tragic death of the miners in West Virginia, the extraction of fossil fuels can result in harm if done without proper information, guidance, and accountability. If the EPA is able to complete a thorough study of the impacts of hydraulic fracturing it will help to ensure that impacts on water resources, land and communities are considered as natural gas extraction continues to expand using this practice. We urge that you support the President's request for an additional \$4.3 million dollars for the EPA to complete a thorough study of the impacts of hydraulic fracturing on God's creation and people.

Sincerely,

The Episcopal Church  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns  
National Council of Churches USA  
Union for Reform Judaism  
United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries  
United Methodist Church – General Board of Church and Society