

A Resolution on Hydraulic Fracturing in North Carolina

Whereas, hydraulic fracturing, or “fracking,” is a method of extracting natural gas that involves fracturing underground rock thousands of feet underground with a high-pressure cocktail of sand, water and toxic chemicals in order to reach pockets of natural gas trapped in shale and coal deposits;

Whereas, millions of gallons of fresh water are used for each fracked well, and the resulting wastewater is contaminated with fracking chemicals, and carcinogens from underground including corrosive salts, radium and benzenes:

Whereas, the fracking wastewater has limited disposal options, and waste water treatment plants are not equipped to remove these chemicals.

Whereas, there are documented impacts on the environment and public health in other states where fracking is used, including contamination of drinking water wells, surface waters and air quality;

Whereas, this is a poorly regulated industry due to a 2005 federal loophole exempting fracking from most federal environmental regulations including the Clean Water Act, the Clean Air Act, and the Safe Drinking Water Act;

Whereas, the Deep River basin, which includes areas in Chatham County has been identified as containing underground coal seam deposits of this natural gas;

Whereas, farmers and other landowners in the Deep River basin in Chatham County are already being asked by drilling companies to sign leases for mineral rights to the gas shales, and these leases may contain “predatory” language unfair and unfavorable to the land owners who sign them, including requirements that landowners to supply the water and host storage ponds for the toxic chemical wastes;

Whereas, Chatham County is an agricultural economy dependent on water for farm use, and the majority of residents rely on private drinking water wells from groundwater;

Whereas, fracking industrializes an area with drilling rigs, new roads, containment ponds, pipelines and other infrastructure that may be detrimental to property values and future economic growth;

Whereas, fracking and the industrialized landscape it brings will be detrimental to tourism and economic growth in Chatham Co.;

[Whereas the town of Pittsboro lies within a 25 mile radius of the Harris Nuclear facility and adjacent Jonesboro Faultline, whereas the entire Deep River shale basin projected for drilling also lies within this 25 mile radius: and the British Geological Survey has stated that "It is well-established that fluid injection can induce small earthquakes", and fluid injection is involved in the new technology for hydraulic fracturing of natural gas wells; and Texas and Arkansas have experienced increased seismic activity due to natural gas drilling and fracking;

Whereas, North Carolina currently does not allow horizontal drilling or injection of hydrofracking fluids, but the energy Industry is seeking to overturn these protections;

Whereas, the US EPA is currently studying the environmental impacts of fracking, and will release initial findings no sooner than December, 2012;

Now Therefore Be It Resolved, that we, the members of the Chatham County Board of Commissioners, urge the North Carolina House of Representatives to uphold Governor Perdue's veto of S709, a bill that would "fast track" hydraulic fracturing and horizontal drilling in NC, and pass no further legislation to legalize hydraulic fracturing and horizontal drilling in NC before we fully understand the consequences of this process on the health, environment and economy of our state and until the EPA study is complete, and then, only if new regulation and enforcement policies and procedures fully protects our waters, land and people from dangerous consequences that could result from hydraulic fracturing.