

March 7, 2011

## **Re: Moratorium on Deep Shale Drilling and use of Horizontal Hydraulic Fracturing**

Dear Members of the 129<sup>th</sup> Ohio General Assembly:

The plans for industrial-scale drilling in the Marcellus and Utica formations of Ohio pose a direct and material threat to the interests of the undersigned organizations and our tens of thousands of individual members throughout the State of Ohio.

The use of high volume hydraulic fracturing with horizontal drilling of the deep shale formation presents significant risk to public health, safety, and the environment. As the use of this relatively new technology has increased nationally, the number of documented spills, blowouts, leaking wells, and other accidents is shocking and the environmental and human consequences have been very serious. For example:

- An explosion and fire at the Chesapeake Appalachia LLC Powers gas well site in Avella, PA, injured three workers on February 23, 2011. DEP investigators reportedly found the fire started as a result of fumes escaping five tanks capable of holding a total of 21,000 gallons of flammable fluid known as wet gas or condensate, contained in natural gas.
- Methane and other toxins contaminated an aquifer serving 19 families in Dimock, Pennsylvania, resulting in a \$4.1 million dollar settlement against Cabot Oil and Gas.
- Wells in Sublette County, Wyoming, contaminated with a variety of toxic compounds used in hydraulic fracturing, including benzene, a toxic chemical known to cause leukemia and aplastic anemia, at 1500 times the safe level for people. Similarly, 1.6 million gallons of hydraulic fracturing fluids escaped into the ground water in Parachute, Colorado
- A study by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality found that pollutants from natural gas drilling in the Barnett Shale field were greater than those produced by all of the vehicular traffic in the Dallas-Ft. Worth area.

In addition, the withdrawal of millions of gallons of fresh water required for such operations' hydraulic fracturing cycle will not only significantly impact Ohio's water resources, but seriously infringe upon the constitutionally protected property rights in groundwater for an untold number of landowners. Further, due to the absence of local zoning and surface property protections, and use of mandatory pooling, landowners face losing essential property interests.

The state lacks the strong and necessary regulations, enforcement capacity, and water treatment capacity, to protect Ohioans and Ohio's natural environment as it relates to this industrial activity. Recently passed SB 165 did not contemplate nor incorporate any protections specific to the unprecedented scale and foreseeable risk of deep-shale drilling and horizontal hydraulic fracturing.

Therefore, the undersigned organizations and individuals conclude that deep-shale hydraulic fracturing presents an unacceptable risk and is not safe under current conditions. **Thus, we urge the General Assembly to immediately issue a moratorium ordering the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) to withhold approval of new well permits for deep shale drilling, exploration, or extraction involving high volume horizontal hydraulic fracturing, until such time as these drilling practices are demonstrated to be safe for the environment and human health and are properly and effectively regulated.**

Sincerely,

**Ohio Organizations and Businesses**

Action Travel Center, Inc.  
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Appalachian Ohio Group- Sierra Club  
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Athens, Ohio

Appalachian Staple Foods Collaborative  
Michelle Ajamian  
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Athens Bicycle Co-operative  
Eric Cornwell  
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Buckeye Forest Council  
Cheryl Johncox, Director  
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Center for Health, Environment and Justice  
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Community Action Alliance  
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Community Food Initiatives  
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Community Food Initiatives (CFI) and The  
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Concerned Citizens for SAFER Drilling  
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Concerned Citizens of Lake  
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IEL Superfund Site & Concerned Citizens of  
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Chris Borello, President  
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Concerned Citizens of Mid Ohio  
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Earth Day Coalition  
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Environmental Health Watch  
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Enviroscapes Landscape Design  
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League of Women Voters of Ohio  
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Lucasville, Ohio

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Hilliard, Ohio

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Sherry Fleming  
Bryan, Ohio

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### **Individual Ohioans**

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Sharon Sahl  
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Steve Shucard  
Twinsburg, Ohio

Sharon Shucard  
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George Skipper  
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Maxine Skuba  
Yellow Springs, Ohio

Robert T. Slater  
Ottawa Hills, Ohio

Aaron Smith  
Athens, Ohio

Derek Smith  
Chagrin Falls, Ohio

Kim Smith  
Lakewood, Ohio

Fred Snell  
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Diane Snider  
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Linda Sohner  
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Lynn Staley  
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Bruce Stefancin  
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Mantua, Ohio

James Tighe  
Mantua, Ohio

Susan Tower  
Yellow Springs, Ohio

Joshua Trapp  
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Mary Trent  
Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio

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Gates Mills, Ohio

Donna Turi  
Mentor, Ohio

Andrea Turi  
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Jeff Turner  
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Sandra Turner  
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