



EPA Changes Course and Admits Link Between Fracking and Underground Water Supplies

US EPA, SOURCE OF DRINKING WATER EXPOSURE, REPORTS

By LANA BECKETT, February 6, 2017

Sameer V. Mohan, an attorney with Baker & Hostetler, **wrote**¹⁾ that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released the final version on December 13 of its report titled "**Hydraulic Fracturing for Oil and Gas: Impacts from the Hydraulic Fracturing Water Cycle on Drinking Water Resources in the United States**"²⁾ ."

Mohan pointed out that in the final version of the report, "EPA admits that fracking 'can impact drinking water resources under some circumstances [and] impacts can range in frequency and severity depending on the combination of hydraulic fracturing water cycle activities and local- or regional-scale factors.'"

The final report, he said, is the result of a five-year study that began in 2010 after a congressional request. It underwent a significant change from the way it was initially presented in 2015. There, the EPA found "no evidence that fracking systematically contaminates water" supplies. This sentence created a controversy ultimately ending with the EPA retracting it from the final report. According to Thomas A. Burke, EPA's science adviser and a deputy assistant administrator of the agency's Office of Research and Development, "EPA scientists chose not to include that sentence. The scientists concluded it could not be quantitatively supported." News agencies such as CNBC quickly noted that the final report found effects on drinking water at each stage of the fracking cycle, from acquisition to disposal. However, Mohan said it is also worth noting that the EPA itself noted that "data gaps and uncertainties" limited its ability to draw additional conclusions about impacts on drinking water resources from fracking activities.

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1. wrote

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2. Hydraulic Fracturing for Oil and Gas: Impacts from the Hydraulic Fracturing Water Cycle on Drinking Water

Resources in the United States

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