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**Citing Growing Science, a Broad Coalition of 61 Health, Environment, Faith and Advocacy Groups Unite to Call on the State Legislature to Pass a Long-Term Moratorium on Fracking in Maryland**

*Organizations warn that permitting fracking in Maryland poses significant threats to the health and safety of Marylanders, and to the quality of our air, water and soil*

**Annapolis, MD**—Seeking to protect Marylanders from the public health and environmental risks of fracking, **61** organizations are calling for a long-term moratorium on high-volume hydraulic fracturing in Maryland. In a position statement released today, the groups emphasized that, “there is no evidence that the state can regulate hydraulic fracturing in a way that adequately protects public health, natural resources, or the economy.”

The diverse coalition of local, state and national public health organizations, faith, environmental, and other advocacy groups citing numerous peer-reviewed studies and reports, are calling on the Maryland General Assembly to pass a long-term moratorium to protect citizens from the many recorded dangers associated with fracking. A [recent analysis](#) found that 96 percent of all papers published on **health impacts** indicate potential risks or adverse health outcomes.

“Recent studies suggest that unconventional natural gas development can cause both short-term and long-term adverse health impacts, some of which may be irreversible,” said **Dr. Gina Angiola**, a member of the **Board of Directors of Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility**. “These types of health impacts carry tremendous emotional and economic costs for families and communities. We urge the Maryland Legislature to adopt a long-term moratorium to allow time for more scientific and medical knowledge to emerge on the impacts of fracking.”

“As a nurse-midwife, I am deeply concerned about the elevated risks of birth defects and low birth weight babies seen in families near fracking sites. We need to protect our future generations and put a hold on fracking in Maryland,” said **Katie Huffling, RN, CNM Director of Programs for the Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments**. “I urge the Maryland legislature to put the health of all Maryland’s citizens first and support a long-term moratorium on fracking Maryland.”

“Five years ago, as companies leased our lands for gas exploitation, a few people in mountain Maryland joined with others across our state to seek protections,” said **Citizen Shale President Paul Roberts**. “We believed that scientific discovery and commonsense caution would one day bring us all to this conclusion: fracking is fraught with unacceptable threats to our water, our air, and our economy. Health is wealth, and we believe Americans everywhere share this preference for our nation’s future.”

The coalition’s statement comes shortly after the New York State Health Department recommended that fracking should not be allowed in that state based on the existing science and the lack of studies on the long term effects of fracking on public health. Subsequently, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo announced a ban on fracking in the state.

“There is no evidence that Governor O’Malley’s proposed regulations will protect Marylanders,” said **Food & Water Watch Executive Director, Wenonah Hauter**. “The Maryland legislature is in a position to follow the leadership of New York Governor Cuomo and take action now to protect residents from the inherent health and safety problems caused by fracking.”

“You can't spin science,” said **Maryland Sierra Club State Director, Josh Tulkin**. “Fracking poses a threat to our health, our environment, and yes, even our economy. And the technology to clean it up simply doesn't exist. It's time to hit the brakes.”

“The safest thing to do in Maryland on fracking is to first and foremost get a moratorium in place,” said **Chesapeake Climate Action Network Executive Director Mike Tidwell**. “The moratorium gives us time to adequately assess the health, economic and climate aspects of this dangerous drilling practice before moving forward on it. We have banded together with public health, environmental, and civic groups across the state to form the largest coalition ever built on this issue to pass the moratorium bill.”

“The proposed regulations sent to AELR repeatedly claimed that gas development would benefit Garrett County financially,” said **Eric Robison, president of Save Western Maryland**. “But we never saw, in over three years of the State commission's work, any comprehensive study addressing specific economic impacts of fracking or addressing Garrett County's economy in general. Recent data crunching out of Pennsylvania show that fracking has a negative impact on property values - up to 20% drop in value, and Garrett County relies primarily on revenue from property values to fund services that would otherwise need to be funded by the State.”

“Fracking for the last bubbles of shale gas is a shortsighted scheme with immediate and long-term dangers,” said **Elisabeth Hoffman of HoCo Climate**

**Change.** “Instead of fracking, we must turn swiftly to renewable energy sources that protect our health, land, air, water and climate.”

"In the hearts of our religious communities is a deep commitment to loving our neighbors—close to home and around the world—which means safeguarding our air, water, and land,” said **Elizabeth Stevens of Interfaith Power & Light**. “That love is why Interfaith Power & Light calls for a long-term moratorium on fracking in Maryland.”

“The mission of each and every elected government entity is to protect the health and welfare of its citizens,” said **Mountain Lake Park Mayor Leo Martin**. “First, the Town of Mountain Lake Park banned fracking because of our experience with conventional drilling in the 1950s. Wildcat drillers damaged the town's infrastructure, polluted the area with wastewater, and abandoned equipment. Second we studied the problems in Pennsylvania. Recent problems there are more worrisome than the problems our town experienced in the 1950s. The uncontrolled use of dangerous chemicals and the pollution of water supplies head the list.”

"Waterkeepers throughout the Chesapeake Bay region recognize the real threats from fracking to western Maryland's economy, water resources, forests and people,” said **Waterkeepers Chesapeake Executive Director Betsy Nicholas**. "The demand for fracked gas will only increase as liquefied natural gas export facilities open such as Dominion’s LNG export facility at Cove Point located on the Chesapeake Bay. Fracking in Maryland will mean short-term profits for oil and gas companies at the great and lasting expense of our land, water and communities.. We call on Maryland lawmakers to enact a long-term moratorium on fracking to allow for the study of cumulative public health effects and to safeguard our water resources for future generations."

National Organization for Women, Maryland Chapter President **Sara WilkInson** said, "Maryland NOW supports a long-term moratorium on fracking. Fracking presents unacceptable health risks--including dangerous chemicals in air and drinking water--and the pending Maryland regulations cannot adequately address these risks. As the mother of a newborn, I support a long-term moratorium on fracking because of the threats it poses to our children."

### **Position Statement in Support of a Long-Term Moratorium on Fracking in Maryland**

Concerned by the rapidly expanding evidence of harm and the growing uncertainties caused by unconventional natural gas development and production, we, the undersigned organizations, call for a long-term moratorium on high-volume hydraulic fracturing in Maryland.

The emerging science now includes hundreds of peer-reviewed studies, case studies, and reports demonstrating that permitting fracking in Maryland poses significant threats to the health and safety of Marylanders and to the quality of our air, water, and soil. Furthermore, it is clear that fundamental data gaps remain regarding the long-term and cumulative health effects of fracking and how to effectively mitigate risks. There is no evidence that the state can regulate hydraulic fracturing in a way that adequately protects public health, natural resources, or the economy.

Citing significant public health risks, including those documented in Maryland's own health study, New York recently announced that it would ban hydraulic fracturing in the State. Maryland, too, should proactively protect the health of its residents.

Based on what we know now, we believe that fracking endangers public health and is the wrong approach to building a robust Maryland economy and a clean energy future. We urge Maryland's legislature to pass an extended moratorium in 2015.

**Full List of Groups signed on to Position Statement:**

Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility ♦ Alliance of Nurses for a Healthy Environment ♦ Maryland Environmental Health Network ♦ Interfaith Power & Light ♦ Citizen Shale ♦ Save Western Maryland ♦ Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake ♦ Garrett Countians for Smart Growth ♦ Calvert Citizens for a Healthy Community ♦ Myersville Citizens for a Rural Community ♦ Howard County Climate Change ♦ Transition Howard County ♦ Howard Park Civic Association ♦ The Harvest Collective ♦ Environment Maryland ♦ Progressive Democrats of America – Maryland ♦ Earthworks ♦ Waterkeepers Chesapeake ♦ Greenbelt Climate Action Network ♦ Chesapeake Climate Action Network ♦ Community Research ♦ Midshore Riverkeeper Conservancy ♦ Clean Water Action ♦ University of Maryland Student Sustainability Committee ♦ Patuxent Riverkeeper ♦ Mountainside Education and Enrichment ♦ Assateague Coastal Trust ♦ Severn Riverkeeper ♦ Maryland Sierra Club ♦ Maryland Pesticide Education Network ♦ Maryland League of Conservation Voters ♦ Gunpowder Riverkeeper ♦ Urban Ecosystems Restorations, Inc. ♦ South River Federation – South Riverkeeper ♦ Friends of Deep Creek Lake ♦ Montgomery County Progressive Alliance ♦ Maryland NOW ♦ Progressive Neighbors ♦ Food & Water Watch ♦ Organic Consumers Association ♦ Environmental Action ♦ Rachel Carson Council ♦ Center for Biological Diversity ♦ Friends of the Earth ♦ Daily Kos ♦ Waterkeeper Alliance ♦ Democracy for America ♦ Progressive Democrats of America ♦ Moms Clean Air Force ♦ Riverkeeper ♦ Natural Resources Defense Council ♦ Mountain Watershed Association/Youghiogheny Riverkeeper ♦ Berks Gas Truth ♦ Grand Riverkeeper ♦ Cahaba Riverkeeper ♦ PASE ♦ Our Health, Our Future, Our Longmont ♦ Apalachicola Riverkeeper ♦ Altamaha Riverkeeper ♦ Lower Mississippi Riverkeeper ♦ Grand Riverkeeper Labrador, Inc.

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