

DAKOTA RESOURCE COUNCIL
P. O. Box 1095, Dickinson ND 58602-1095
(701) 483-2851; www.drcinfo.com

DRC Calls on State to Drop Link to Oil Industry Website on Fracking

October 29, 2010

Dakota Resource Council today criticized the Department of Mineral Resources for urging North Dakota residents visiting its website to weigh in with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency against regulation of hydraulic fracturing.

"For our government to not only promote an industry position, but to ask that citizens agree is irresponsible," stated Donny Nelson, Keene, chair of DRC's Oil and Gas Task Force. "To ensure corporate interests over the public's is just unbelievably incompetent and simply not the Industrial Commission's job."

EPA is currently reviewing a 2004 study of hydraulic fracturing in light of complaints from around the country that "fracking" has contaminated drinking water supplies.

At stake is possible revision of a law passed in 2005 exempting oil and gas companies from reporting the content of "fracking" fluids to federal agencies, making it more difficult to trace sources of drinking water contamination.

The fluids generally contain mostly water, but also toxic chemicals such as benzene and toluene.

"We have a right to know what's going into our ground and our water. We need water not only to make a living, but to survive," said Melvin Wisdahl, Corinth. "Our government's job is to protect the people and our survival, not corporate interests."

The website asks visitors to "take action" by signing a form letter provided by Energy Citizens, a front group funded by the American Petroleum Institute, the largest, most powerful lobbying group for the oil and gas industry in the United States.

North Dakota experienced its first major spill of fracking fluids on September 1, 2010 near Killdeer. The incident is still under investigation.

"A spill already happened, and it can happen again. Hydraulic fracturing needs to be closely monitored, especially after the Killdeer spill," said Roger Brenna, New Town. "We need to know what's in, so we can be safe, and so we can protect our land and our livestock."

The Industrial Commission does provide a pop-up disclaimer for those who hit the action link, stating that you will be taken to a site not maintained by state government.

DRC says the disclaimer is not adequate and leaves the impression that the website represents official state policy, especially since there are no links to websites that offer a different view of fracking policy.

Dakota Resource Council is a nonprofit, grassroots activist organization. DRC works for preservation of family farms, enforcement of corporate farming laws, soil and water conservation, regulation of coal mining and oil and gas development, protection of groundwater and clean air, renewable energy, and sound management of solid and toxic wastes. The mission of DRC is to form enduring, democratic local groups that empower people to influence decision-making processes that affect their lives.

For interviews and more information about Dakota Resource Council, please contact Ashley Lauth at 701.212.3871 or at ashley@drcinfo.com

Donny Nelson – 701.675.2417

Roger Brenna – 701.675.2453

Melvin Wisdahl – 701.539.2221