

Monongahela River Action Alert

The Monongahela River (a tributary of the Ohio River) provides drinking water for hundreds of thousands of people, and is home to some of the best fishing, whitewater boating, and wildlife habitat in the eastern United States. However, the river is threatened by natural gas extraction activities in a region known as the Marcellus Shale. In order to remove gas from the rock (or shale), water mixed with chemicals is forcefully injected into the well in a process known as hydraulic fracturing. This process can contaminate water supplies— impacting drinking water, river recreation, and human and animal health. We need Congress to support the Fracturing Responsibility and Awareness of Chemicals (FRAC) Act of 2009, which will reduce water quality degradation associated with Marcellus Shale drilling and protect the region’s clean water for future generations.

Target:

Members of Congress [House and Senate] by zip

Letter:

Dear [*Decision Maker*],

As a concerned constituent, I am writing to request your support for the Fracturing Responsibility and Awareness of Chemicals (FRAC) Act of 2009 (S. 1215/H.R. 2766). The FRAC Act would repeal the exemption for hydraulic fracturing in the Safe Drinking Water Act and require disclosure of the chemicals used in hydraulic fracturing fluids.

As you may know, energy companies have already begun to extract the natural gas found in the Marcellus Shale formation through a process called hydraulic fracturing. In this process, massive quantities of water, often taken from rivers, streams, and lakes, are mixed with chemicals and injected into the earth thousands of feet below the surface in order to release the gas. Excessive water withdrawals can hurt river flows, wildlife, and river recreation. Run-off from drilling sites, along with the wastewater generated in the gas extraction process, puts surface and groundwater quality at risk.

In 2005, the Safe Drinking Water Act was changed to exempt hydraulic fracturing wastewater from the standards required for safe drinking water for our communities leaving it almost completely unregulated. It is unacceptable to subject our community to polluted drinking water due to a loophole in the law.

Development of natural gas from the Marcellus Shale may be important for our energy future and that of the local communities in the region. However, that development must occur in a balanced way, so that the integrity of our clean water is not compromised. Your support for the FRAC Act is essential to ensure the protection of many major drinking water resources. Please urge Congressional leadership to consider this legislation as soon as possible.

Thank you for considering my request. Please notify me in writing of your decision.