

DONATE



SITE SEARCH

POLICYBOT ENHANCED SEARCH

ABOUT US

[About Us](#)

[Who We Are](#)

[What We Do](#)

[What They're Saying](#)

[Reply to Our Critics](#)

[Careers](#)

[Internships](#)

[Volunteering](#)

[Funding](#)

[Contact Us](#)

[Alcohol & Tobacco](#)

[Climate Change](#)

Constitutional Reform

Criminal Justice

Economy

Education

Employment

Energy

Entitlements

Environment

FIRE

Government & Politics

Government Spending

Health Care

Immigration

InfoTech & Telecom

Law

Regulation

Taxes

Transportation

Books

Newspapers and Newsletters

Policy Publications

SUBSCRIBE

Multimedia

Videos

Podcasts

Events

Donate

Corporate & Foundation Support

Donation Policies

Estate & Financial Planning Partners

Volunteer Opportunities

| PUBLICATIONS & RESOURCES | PUBLICATIONS



RESEARCH & COMMENTARY: BANNING FRACKING IN OREGON WOULD BE A MISTAKE

MAY 3, 2017

By [Tim Benson](#)

There Is No Scientific Justification For Banning Hydraulic Fracturing In Oregon



A [proposal](#) that would ban hydraulic fracturing in the Beaver State until 2028 is being considered by the Oregon state legislature. While there is no hydraulic fracturing, also known as “fracking,” currently taking place in Oregon, there are coalbed methane reserves in the Willamette Valley in the western part of the state, as well as gas in the Snake River Basin along the border with Idaho. [Some lawmakers](#) are alleging fracking, among other things, endangers public health by polluting groundwater, and the bill itself says it is “necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health and safety.” However, these claims are unfounded and not supported by the presently available, well-researched data.

Enacting this ban on fracking would be a costly mistake. The existing peer-reviewed evidence shows hydraulic fracturing processes do not pose a systemic impact on groundwater. Since 2010, at least 18 of these studies have been produced, including ones by the [Bureau of Economic Geology](#) at the Jackson School of Geosciences at the University of Texas-Austin, the [Department of Geology](#) at the McMicken College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Cincinnati, the [California Council on Science and Technology](#) and the [Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory](#), the Department of Energy’s [National Energy Technology Laboratory](#), and Germany’s [Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources](#). The [latest study](#), funded in part by anti-fracking Natural Resources Defense Council, led by researchers at Duke University, and released in April 2017, also comes to the same conclusion.

This is reinforced by the Environmental Protection Agency's own [\\$29-million, six-year study](#) of fracking's impact on groundwater sources, which failed to find any systemic impact caused by the 110,000 oil and natural gas wells that have been in use across the country since 2011.

As well as being environmentally safe, fracking has had a positive economic impact on those areas that have allowed the practice. A [study](#) released in late December 2016 of communities near shale basins – conducted by researchers at the University of Chicago, Princeton University, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) – determined hydraulic fracturing activity brings \$1,300 to \$1,900 in annual benefits to local households, including “a 7 percent increase in average income, driven by rises in wages and royalty payments, a 10 percent increase in employment, and a 6 percent increase in housing prices.”

“Our estimates are based on the knowledge that communities currently have ... [and] based on what is currently known, the average community that has allowed fracking has enjoyed substantial net benefits,” said lead researcher Michael Greenstone of the University of Chicago.

The fracking process has transformed the energy outlook of the United States over the past decade, and the rise of shale gas as a replacement for coal has been primarily responsible for the United States now enjoying its [lowest level of carbon-dioxide emissions](#) since 1989. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA), fracking now accounts for [51 percent](#) of all U.S. crude oil production. EIA also estimates the continuing switch of electricity-generation fuels to fracking-produced natural gas is responsible for 63 percent of the drop in U.S. energy-related carbon-dioxide emissions over the past decade. The oil and natural gas hydraulic fracturing has enabled us to exploit are cost-effective and abundant, and they can ensure the United States is the world's largest energy producer well beyond the 21st century.

Drilling is currently being conducted across the country in a safe and responsible manner. Federal, state, and local governments have tested thousands of sites for hydraulic fracturing pollution of groundwater and drinking water resources, as well as for air quality. Flatly, there is no scientific justification for banning hydraulic fracturing or overregulating it out of existence.

The following documents provide more information about hydraulic fracturing.

The Local Economic and Welfare Consequences of Hydraulic Fracturing

<https://www.heartland.org/publications-resources/publications/the-local-economic-and-welfare-consequences-of-hydraulic-fracturing>

This comprehensive study published by the National Bureau of Economic Research says fracking brings, on average, provide \$1,300–\$1,900 in annual benefits to local households, including a 7 percent increase in average income, a 10 percent increase in employment, and a 6 percent increase in housing prices.

What If ... Hydraulic Fracturing Was Banned?

<https://www.heartland.org/publications-resources/publications/what-if-hydraulic-fracturing-was-banned>

This study is the fourth in a series of studies produced by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Institute for 21st Century Energy. It examines what a nationwide ban on hydraulic fracturing would entail. The report's authors found by 2022, a ban would cause 14.8 million jobs to “evaporate,” almost double gasoline and electricity prices, and increase natural gas prices by 400 percent. Moreover, cost of living expenses would increase by nearly \$4,000 per family, household incomes would be reduced by \$873 billion, and GDP would be reduced by \$1.6 trillion.

What If ... America's Energy Renaissance Never Happened?

<https://www.heartland.org/publications-resources/publications/what-if-americas-energy-renaissance-never-actually-happened>

This report by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Institute for 21st Century Energy examines the impact the development of shale oil and gas has had on the United States. The report's authors found that without the fracking-related "energy renaissance," 4.3 million jobs in the United States may not have been created and \$548 billion in annual GDP may have disappeared since 2009. Electricity prices would also be 31 percent higher and gasoline prices 43 percent higher.

Hydraulic Fracturing a Game-Changer for U.S. Energy and Economies

<https://www.heartland.org/publications-resources/publications/hydraulic-fracturing-a-game-changer-for-us-energy-and-economies?source=policybot>

In this *Policy Study* from The Heartland Institute, Heartland Research Fellow Isaac Orr explains the advantages and disadvantages of smart drilling and its alternatives. Orr reviews the background and potential of hydraulic fracturing in the United States and puts that potential in the context of the supply of and demand for oil and gas. He addresses the environmental impacts of hydraulic fracturing, both positive and negative, as well as the public safety issues raised by activists, such as potential harm to drinking water supplies. Orr also discusses how oil and gas production is regulated at the state and national levels and suggests appropriate policies for the industry.

Bill McKibben's Terrifying Disregard for Fracking Facts

<https://www.heartland.org/publications-resources/publications/bill-mckibbens-terrifying-disregard-for-fracking-facts?source=policybot>

This Heartland Institute *Policy Study*, written by Research Fellow Isaac Orr, examines how methane emissions are measured, reports the effect those emissions may have on global warming, and discusses several falsehoods journalist Bill McKibben repeats from the discredited movie *Gasland*. It also evaluates the available fracking alternatives and discusses the relatively small impact new methane-emissions rules enacted by the Environmental Protection Agency will likely have on Earth's climate.

Research & Commentary: Study on Fracking-Related Air Pollution in Ohio Retracted Due to Errors

<https://www.heartland.org/publications-resources/publications/research--commentary-study-on-fracking-related-air-pollution-in-ohio-retracted-due-to-errors?source=policybot>

Tim Benson, policy analyst at The Heartland Institute, writes about a joint study from researchers at Oregon State University and the University of Cincinnati – originally published in the peer-reviewed journal *Environmental Science and Technology* in March 2015 – claimed hydraulic fracturing, also called "fracking," of the Utica shale in Carroll County, Ohio is causing significant air pollution. But the researchers have retracted the controversial study due to its numerous miscalculations and errors. When much of the erroneous data was corrected, the researchers found they "significantly" changed "air concentrations ... relative to those reported in the published article."

Fracking Facts: The Science, Economics, and Legal Realities

<https://www.heartland.org/publications-resources/publications/fracking-facts-the-science-economics-and-legal-realities?source=policybot>

Hydraulic fracturing, commonly known as fracking, has been employed in the United States since the 1940s. Although innovation has improved the precision of the process, the essentials are the same. Utilizing horizontal drilling, a mixture of mostly water, sand, and trace amounts of chemicals, are used to create fissures in underground shale deposits to allow oil and natural gas trapped in hard rock to move toward the surface to be collected. Activists have blamed fracking and the processes associated with it for emissions of pollutants, earthquakes, and even groundwater contamination, though independent evidence consistently shows these

allegations to be false. Leigh Thompson of the Texas Public Policy Foundation argues the evidence supporting fracking bans looks slim when attention is drawn to the facts.

Nothing in this *Research & Commentary* is intended to influence the passage of legislation, and it does not necessarily represent the views of The Heartland Institute. For further information on this subject, visit [Environment & Climate News](#), The Heartland Institute's [website](#), and [PolicyBot](#), Heartland's free online research database.

The Heartland Institute can send an expert to your state to testify or brief your caucus; host an event in your state; or send you further information on a topic. Please don't hesitate to contact us if we can be of assistance! If you have any questions or comments, contact John Nothdurft, Heartland's director of government relations, at john@heartland.org or 312/377-4000.

ARTICLE TAGS

ENERGY

ENVIRONMENT

SUB-TOPICS

Energy: Hydraulic Fracturing "Fracking"

Energy: Regulation

Energy: Oil

Energy: Natural Gas

AUTHOR



[Tim Benson](#)

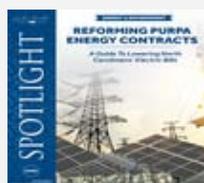
Tim Benson joined The Heartland Institute in September 2015 as a policy analyst in the Government Relations Department.

[Full Bio](#) ›

TBenson@heartland.org

RELATED PUBLICATIONS

[VIEW ALL](#)



JUNE 6, 2017

[Reforming PURPA Energy Contracts: A Guide to Lowering North Carolinians' Electric Bills](#)



MAY 19, 2017

Research & Commentary: Study Says Methane in North Texas Wells Is Naturally Occurring, Not the Result of Hydraulic Fracturing

By Tim Benson



MAY 17, 2017

Testimony Before the Rhode Island House Committee on Finance

By Tim Benson



MAY 15, 2017

Research & Commentary: Peer-Reviewed Study Says Hydraulic Fracturing Not Responsible for Groundwater Contamination in West Virginia

By Tim Benson

CONTACT US

3939 North Wilke Road
Arlington Heights, Illinois 60004

PHONE: 312/377-4000
FAX: 312/277-4122

HEARTLAND SITES

- [Reply to Our Critics](#)
- [NIPCC: Climate Change Reconsidered](#)
- [The Parent Trigger](#)
- [Emerging Issues Forum](#)
- [Climate Change Awards](#)

- [Climate Conferences](#)
- [Fakegate \(Peter Gleick\)](#)
- [Left Exposed](#)
- [Our American Constitution](#)

Support us in
PROMOTING FREEDOM

Your support of Heartland will allow us to continue to educate others about our work.

Give to Heartland