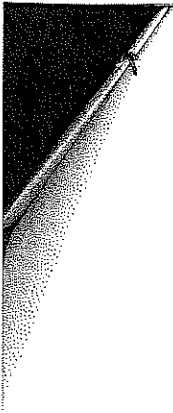


An Argument Against Fracking

Along with the evolution of the energy industry, fracking (also called hydraulic fracturing) has become a more widespread method of extracting oil and natural gas from the ground. In recent years, a fracking boom has occurred in the United States, driven by concerns over energy security and the cost of imported fossil fuels. Although this process can strengthen energy security and energy independence, fracking has become both a political and an environmental issue. The most important question concerned with fracking is whether this process is worth the risks. Environmental critics claim that fracking can destroy public drinking water, pollute the air, contribute to greenhouse gases, cause tremors in the earth, and discourage the exploration of new energy sources. Due to the environmental risks associated with fracking, it is not an energy source that society should come to rely on. We should instead shift our focus to less destructive, renewable sources of energy.

Proponents of fracking claim that it allows us to access more natural gas and oil than ever before. While this is true, it takes our focus away from more sustainable energy sources. These fossil fuels are likely to run out during our lifetimes, at which point we will be forced to find another source of energy. It is unreasonable to invest so much time and effort in the fracking process if these resources will be depleted in such a short amount of time. It would be much more reasonable to focus our attention on non-depleting energy sources such as wind and solar power. Wind and solar have a number of benefits over the use of natural gas and oil recovered from fracking: they do not release billions of metric tons of greenhouse gases every year, they do not spew large quantities of chemical-laced water into the ground, and they will never be depleted by human activity.

Fracking has gained support due to the claim that using the natural gas extracted during this process, rather than coal, would improve air quality. A decrease in air pollution would be marked by a significant reduction in carbon dioxide emissions; however, this decrease in air pollution would be accompanied by other forms of pollution. The process of fracking involves blasting water, chemicals, and sand beneath Earth's surface to obtain fossil fuels. As a result,



water supplies in fracking zones show an increase in toxic chemicals. Fracking may look good on the surface, as it provides us with the fossil fuels that we demand as a country; however, poisoning the groundwater that our country relies on is not beneficial in any way. What is the point in decreasing air pollution if we are killing people through other sources, such as water? Fracking would not be an improvement in pollution, it would just obscure this pollution by sending it underground.

A third argument made in favor of fracking is that it decreases our dependence on foreign oil and, as a result, saves us money. By uncovering domestic oil sources, the United States can become less dependent on other nations and can also experience economic benefits. Although fracking provides more security for our country in regards to oil, it would, at the same time, destroy our groundwater supplies by contaminating it with toxins and by pumping out such large amounts of water required for the fracturing process that it becomes depleted. This destruction of our water supplies would have the opposite impact than intended; it would be very costly to cleanse the contaminated water supplies and, if fracking becomes enough of an issue, we might even become dependent on other nations for cleaner water supplies. There are both environmental and monetary costs to this process, many of which are unforeseen consequences that can be avoided by eliminating the use of fracking.

In the discussion of fracking, many factors must be considered; it is a complicated process that produces complicated results. Proponents of fracking argue that it would allow us to access more natural gas and oil, that it would contribute to improved air quality, and that it would decrease dependency on foreign oil and, as a result, generate economic benefits. Considering these advantages, fracking seems to be beneficial; however there are more risks concerning fracking than what meets the eye. Environmental activists have uncovered some of these risks, claiming that the ability to access more fossil fuels through fracking diverts attention from more sustainable energy sources, that fracking actually creates much more pollution than is necessary, and that the ensuing destruction of our water supplies would have negative economic impacts and could potentially make us dependent on other nations for clean water sources. Fracking clearly is not as good as it seems on the surface and it would be ridiculous to focus our

attention on such a destructive energy source when we have plenty of safer sources of energy to invest in.