

# Maryland Legislators, Businesses and Health Professionals Call for Fracking Moratorium

## ***Rally Highlights Scientific Evidence of Fracking's Harms; Polls Show Majority of Marylanders Opposed to Drilling***

**Annapolis, Md.** – The [Protect Our Health And Communities Act](#) (HB 449/SB 409), a fracking moratorium bill introduced by Maryland Senator Karen Montgomery, Delegate David Fraser-Hidalgo, and 51 other General Assembly members, will be heard before the Senate Committee on Education, Health and Environmental Affairs today. The Don't Frack Maryland campaign held a rally in support of the bill, citing concerns over fracking's effects on public health, tourism, real estate, agriculture, organic farming, and recreation industries, and Maryland's long-term economic outlook. On Monday a [letter](#) was sent to the Maryland General Assembly from over 85 Western Maryland businesses calling for a fracking moratorium.

Meanwhile, a recent [Goucher poll](#) found that 59 percent agree natural gas drilling in Maryland poses a major risk to the state's water resources, and a [poll released yesterday](#) by Chesapeake Climate Action Network found that 68 percent of Marylanders are opposed to fracking in the state right now.

“This bill will keep our pristine environment,” said **Senator Karen Montgomery**, the bill's Senate Sponsor. “A long-term moratorium on fracking is the responsible choice to determine the effects it will have, not only on public health, but also on Maryland's tourism, real estate, agriculture and small businesses.”

“We are seeing more and more, that the detrimental effects of fracking are not isolated within the energy industry. Fracking not only impacts our personal health but also the health of our state's economy,” said **Delegate David Fraser-Hidalgo**, the bill's House sponsor. “I don't want to see fracking come to Maryland before first understanding the long-term health, environmental and economic impacts.”

Advocates for the bill argue that fracking should only be allowed in Maryland if the technology is shown to be safe, but there is increasing evidence that this practice is simply too dangerous. [Hundreds of peer-reviewed scientific studies](#) have identified numerous human health risks, air and water pollution, increased earthquake activity, and social problems linked to drilling and fracking in states where it already occurs.

“Anyone who thinks that fracking can be done without harming the environment or affecting resident's health should talk to people in Pennsylvania who are living through a nightmare,” said **Wenonah Hauter, Executive Director of Food & Water Watch**. “Families living in fracking zones around the

country are struggling with poisoned drinking water, air pollution, fires, explosions, and even earthquakes. In the meantime, the boom-and-bust cycle that marks the fossil fuel industry leaves communities to clean up the mess left behind when the price of fuel is low.”

Signers of the businesses letter claim that Maryland’s tourism-based economy is not compatible with fracking’s negative effects on health, water, air and land. According to the letter, more than half of Garrett County’s jobs and two-thirds of the tax base are derived from tourism-related real estate and business development.

“Fracking will decimate industries like tourism, real estate, and agriculture by industrializing farmland and contaminating land and water,” said **Nadine Grabania, Owner of Deep Creek Cellars** in Garrett County. “Who wants to go on vacation and see a fracking rig? No one. And when the industry leaves, Marylanders will be stuck with their mess. How are we supposed to develop after that?”

“As a resident of Garrett County, I want everyone to understand that many in our communities are outraged at the thought of fracking,” said **Ann Bristow, Safe Drilling Initiative Commissioner**. “We depend on tourism, outdoor recreation, and the vacation home tax base. If fracking moves in, our businesses will leave the area, our property values will plummet, our air, water, and soil will be threatened, and our health will be endangered.”

The future of Marylanders’ public health and environment rests on the passage of this bill,” said **Maya Spaur, Director of Governmental Affairs, Student Sustainability Committee for UMD Student Government Association**. “This session our legislators face a critical choice, a choice that should be easy. The hydraulic fracturing process has been shown to leak toxic chemicals into our air and water sources, devastating local environments and causing adverse health effects—rendering our children, pregnant women, and the elderly most vulnerable.”

In addition to the economic shortfalls from fracking, its health effects cannot be ignored. Recent studies suggest there are significant adverse health risks from exposures related to fracking. Health professionals warn that it would be irresponsible to move forward with fracking at this time given the trends emerging in the science.

“As a health professional, I have a duty to prevent harm,” said **Gina Angiola, M.D., Board Member of Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility and cofounder of CHP-Md**. “There is no price tag that can be put on a family’s health or on permanent environmental degradation. The only way to truly protect Maryland communities is to prevent fracking from coming to Maryland at this time.”

For more information on the statewide campaign for a moratorium on fracking in Maryland:[www.dontfrackmd.org](http://www.dontfrackmd.org).

**Contact:** Ryanne Waters – [rwaters\[at\]fwwatch\[dot\]org](mailto:rwaters@fwwatch.org)

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