



American Association of Petroleum Geologists Statements

Hydraulic Fracturing

Issue: Regulatory oversight of hydraulic fracturing treatments for shale gas, coalbed methane and other hydrocarbon wells that may occur near zones of potable water are currently regulated at the state level. Federal legislative efforts to regulate hydraulic fracturing are not necessary because the States have been successfully regulating this process for at least 50 years.

Background: Modern fracturing practices work to safeguard the environment and present minimal potential damage to fresh-water zones. Most hydraulic fracturing takes place in zones removed from drinking-water supplies. Although fracturing fluids vary widely, the commonly used ingredients are limited in toxicity and/or mobility in water.

Oversight of hydraulic fracturing operations currently resides at the state level. Because of the natural geologic variability on a basin-by-basin and state-by-state basis, each hydraulic fracturing treatment must be designed according to local geologic conditions. Consequently, they are best overseen by a regulator with regional geological knowledge and expertise.

Statement:

- AAPG opposes federally mandated regulation of hydraulic fracturing treatments, preferring regional regulatory expertise at the state level.
- Permit procedures for fracturing within fresh-water aquifer zones (mostly undertaken in support of methane production from coal beds) should be designed on a basin-by-basin and state-by-state basis.
- Permitting agencies should bear in mind in each instance the wide variety of possible designs of fracture treatments, and the geologic relationships of reservoir beds and aquifers unique to each area.

As a professional, scientific association, AAPG is a credible source of information of interest to a wide spectrum of individuals. AAPG has a proud history of providing information to decision-makers and the public on matters concerning the science and profession of petroleum exploration.

In this role, AAPG has given testimony before the U.S. Congress, provided information to lawmakers on a national, state and local level, and has adopted statements that the association believes are of importance.

The following are the statements that are currently in effect. These were revised or added in June 2007 and will be reviewed periodically. They can also be accessed at: <http://dpa.aapg.org/gac/index.cfm>