



GET THE FACTS: On Fracking and the Clean Energy Boom

New advancements in fracking technology have sparked an affordable, clean energy boom that has led to newly created jobs, lower energy prices, and has significantly reduced America's carbon emissions. Despite its benefits, misinformation regarding fracking has led some to lobby against its use.

What is Hydraulic Fracturing?

Hydraulic fracturing (fracking) allows energy companies to access oil and gas trapped underground that was formerly considered inaccessible. Fracking itself is when fluid, comprised of water, sand, and a small percent of chemicals, is injected into the rock of a previously drilled oil or gas well at high enough pressure to fracture the formation. The sand allows the gas to flow from the formation into the well, and the fluid is largely removed so that gas and oil extraction can occur. [[CRS](#), [CRS](#)]

Why Frack?

Though fracking has been used for over 60 years, recent technological advancements enabled gas production at higher quantities. Today, [90 percent](#) of new oil and gas wells on public lands utilize hydraulic fracturing.

In fact, natural gas is so plentiful due to fracking, that over the past four years its price has dropped from \$7 or \$8 per unit to [\\$3](#). As a result, companies increasingly use natural gas to produce electricity instead of coal. Today, [26 percent](#) of electricity consumed in the U.S. comes from natural gas, second only to coal.

And though energy production is booming, the increased use of low-carbon natural gas has allowed carbon dioxide emissions in the U.S. to reach a [20-year low](#). As noted environmentalist Bjørn Lomborg of the Copenhagen Business School explained, "Fracking is not a panacea, but it really is by far this decade's best green-energy option."

Is Fracking Safe?

Despite fracking's environmental benefits, misinformation and alarmism regarding fracking's safety has led many activists to demand increased regulations of the practice, and some have even called for its ban.

Specifically, critics are concerned about methane leaking into water supplies and the disposal of fracking fluid. Yet extensive studies suggest that such alarmism is unfounded and common sense oversight of fracking can protect the public and our natural resources. Fracking has been used [1.2 million times](#) in the last 60 years, and a recent study by researchers at the University of Texas found there has [never been a direct link](#) between fracking and groundwater contamination.

There is a need to enforce existing regulations. Studies also [have shown](#) "some contamination has occurred near the surface when gases and drilling fluids escape from poorly lined wells or storage ponds." However, [existing regulations](#) cover these contaminations.

The Big Picture

Americans need affordable, reliable energy to heat, cool, and power our homes, schools, hospitals, and factories. The development of new technologies and extraction practices, like hydraulic fracturing, are helping meet this need by increasing our access to natural gas. Natural gas is a relatively low-carbon energy source and with proper oversight, the fracking process can impose minimal disruption to our natural resources. Americans should learn more about this process and welcome its use and expansion.

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