



September 3, 2013

Governor Jerry Brown
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Impose Moratorium on Fracking and Well Simulation in California

Dear Governor Brown:

On behalf of NRDC (Natural Resources Defense Council), which has 1.4 million members and activists, 250,000 of whom are Californians, we are writing to request that you use your executive authority to place an immediate moratorium on hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, and other well stimulation activities in California unless and until the public health risks and environmental impacts have been studied and adequate regulatory safeguards put in place to protect against them. We have met with your legislative staff and staff at the Department of Conservation on several occasions regarding fracking and other well stimulation activities and we appreciate the open dialogue and consideration of our views.

We thank you for your leadership combatting climate change and moving California to a clean energy future. Your support for AB 32 and California's other clean air and clean energy policies and programs are critically important as the state continues its implementation of these landmark laws. We are concerned, though, that energy production through relatively new and emerging oil drilling technologies is at odds with California's clean energy and climate goals.

Fracking is already happening in California, and there are active plans to extract more oil and gas on a massive scale. The time to act is now. Oil companies are poised to increase their fracking operations to exploit the massive Monterey Shale Formation, and federal loopholes and inadequate state-level regulation have left Californians without even the most basic protections in place. The effects of fracking and other well stimulation activities are largely unknown and uncertain. What we do know is that this controversial process involves injecting underground a cocktail of chemicals that can include toxics like hydrofluoric acid, formaldehyde and benzene, potentially adjacent to groundwater, without disclosure of those chemicals or their amounts to the state, the public or even medical professionals. We also know that emissions from oil and gas facilities include toxic air contaminants and have been shown to contribute to regional ozone and greenhouse gas increases. We need time for independent studies to be conducted and safeguards to be put in place to protect California's drinking water, public health, air, and communities from pollution and induced seismic activity.

California has been at the forefront of environmental protection in many areas, but on fracking the state has fallen behind. It's time for us to catch up to the other states that have acted to protect public health and the environment on this critical issue. New York's governor issued an executive order halting fracking in order to give state regulators time to analyze environmental impacts and develop rules. The state of Vermont and local governments in several states have imposed moratoria or banned fracking entirely.

A majority of Californians agree that a moratorium on fracking is needed now. A recent poll by the University of Southern California and the Los Angeles Times showed that 58 percent of California voters want a moratorium on fracking, at least until an independent commission has studied fracking's environmental impacts.

Governor Brown, you have the ability to make sure that Californians' safety and public health come first. You can issue an executive order directing the Division of Oil, Gas and Geothermal Resources (DOGGR) to carry out its statutory duty to prevent oil and gas operations from harming human health, property, and natural resources.¹ Until there is a better understanding of the risks of fracking and sufficient safeguards against them are in place, allowing fracking to continue leaves the health of Californians and our precious natural resources unprotected. We urge you to impose an immediate time-out on fracking while the state evaluates the risks and how to protect Californians against them.

Sincerely,



Victoria Rome
California Legislative Director



Damon Nagami
Senior Attorney

¹ See Public Resources Code section 3106(a).