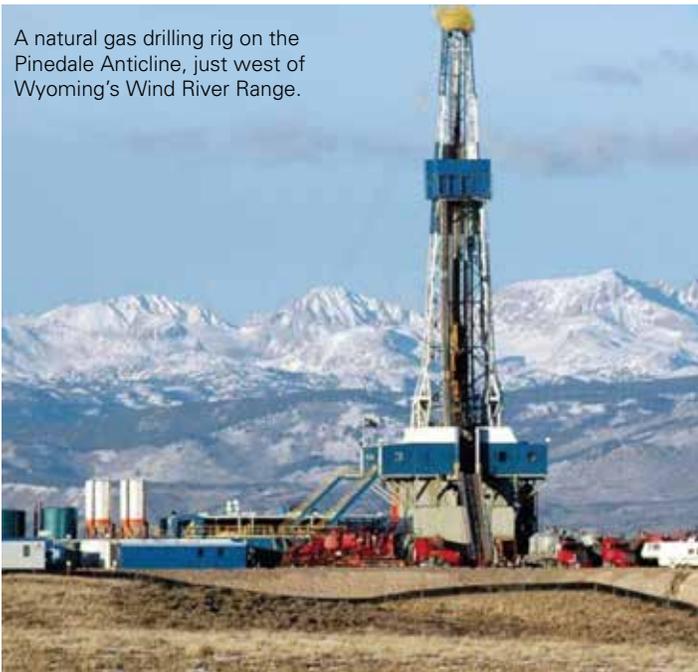


# Fracking Threatens Our Health, Communities, and Climate

The oil and gas industry is rapidly expanding production across America as new technology makes it easier to extract oil or gas from previously inaccessible sites. Over the past decade, the industry has drilled hundreds of thousands of new wells across more than 30 states. These wells are accompanied by massive new infrastructure to move, process, and deliver oil and gas, together resulting in full-scale industrialization of communities and previously rural landscapes.

This expansion has been spurred by the use of hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, in which dangerous chemicals are mixed with large quantities of water and sand and injected underground into wells at extremely high pressure to release oil and gas. Fracking companies enjoy exemptions from important provisions of the nation's bedrock federal environmental laws that other industries must follow, including the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Safe Drinking Water Act, and federal hazardous waste laws. At the same time, states have failed to sufficiently fill in the gaps in protections. As a result, unconventional oil and gas development using advanced fracking methods is jeopardizing the quality of our air, water, and land across the country.

A natural gas drilling rig on the Pinedale Anticline, just west of Wyoming's Wind River Range.



## THE DANGERS OF FRACKING

A growing body of scientific studies reveals dangerous levels of toxic air pollution near fracking sites that has been linked to a wide range of health impacts, including respiratory problems, cancer, and birth defects. Oil and gas extraction have created smog in rural areas at levels worse than downtown Los Angeles.

Meanwhile, the millions of gallons of water used in fracking operations not only strain water resources, but end up as vast amounts of contaminated wastewater. This puts neighboring waterways and drinking water supplies at risk. In fact, fracking has been linked to polluted drinking water around the country.

On top of that, oil and gas operations, including fracking, leak and intentionally emit massive amounts of methane, an extremely potent climate change pollutant. And there is even evidence that fracking can trigger earthquakes, with studies linking fracking to increased seismic activity in places where natural shaking is rare.



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Natural gas development close to homes in Frederick, Colorado.



## STANDING UP TO FRACKING

America's fracking boom is at a turning point. Thousands of communities across the country are feeling the dangerous impacts of fracking and its related infrastructure. Gaping loopholes in federal environmental laws—as well as inadequate state rules and enforcement—leave communities vulnerable to harmful health and environmental impacts. Meanwhile, ongoing investments in fracking technology threaten to lock our nation into a dirty energy future and delay our transition to a clean energy economy.

In response, NRDC is using an all-hands-on-deck approach to protect against fracking's risks. First and foremost, our Community Fracking Defense Project is helping communities at the state and local levels assert their rights to protect themselves. This means providing communities and states such as New York—which banned fracking in December 2014—and communities around the country with the necessary tools to determine their own energy futures, defending them in court when industry challenges them, and sharing their stories across our networks. We are also fighting for state and federal safeguards to provide a last line of defense for communities that lack moratoria or bans and are currently at risk from fracking.

## OUR PRIORITIES

NRDC is fighting to protect people and the environment from the risks of fracking and helping communities defend themselves, as well as fighting to make dirty fuels a thing of the past. We are working to:

- Enable communities to determine their own energy futures through comprehensive zoning and planning rules, including, where desired and feasible, bans or moratoria on new oil and gas development;
- Set strong clean air standards that minimize methane leakage and prevent dangerous smog-forming and cancer-causing toxic air pollution;
- Mandate the strongest possible siting, design, construction, and operation standards and other drilling best practices for all oil and gas exploration and production facilities;
- Close loopholes in America's bedrock environmental laws;
- Fund robust inspection and enforcement programs for oil and gas operations, and require that oil and gas companies post adequate bonds or other financial securities to pay for problems when they happen;
- Put sensitive lands and watersheds completely off-limits to oil and gas production;
- Mandate full public disclosure of information regarding chemicals used in fracking;
- Ensure full transparency and public participation in permitting and regulatory processes associated with oil and gas development, and allow citizens to bring enforcement actions against lawbreakers;
- Advance clean energy solutions through energy efficiency, stronger regulations in the energy and transportation sectors, and broader deployment of clean energy infrastructure and technologies.