



February 20, 2014

## **Let's Protect America's Health from Fracking**

Dear President Obama and state officials,

As doctors, nurses, researchers and other health professionals, we are deeply concerned about fracking and its growing threat to public health and the environment. Fracking operations often use toxic chemicals, generate millions of gallons of wastewater that can be laced with cancer-causing and even radioactive material, and release volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and other harmful pollutants into the air we breathe. Each of these fracking threats is increasingly taking its toll, including:

- Fracking and its toxic waste have contaminated drinking water sources from Pennsylvania to New Mexico;
- There is a growing number of documented cases of individuals suffering acute and chronic health effects while living near fracking operations – including nausea, rashes, dizziness, headaches and nose bleeds;
- Physicians reviewing medical records in Pennsylvania have called these illnesses “the tip of the iceberg” of fracking impacts on health; and
- A study by researchers at the University of Colorado School of Public Health showed that people living within a half-mile of fracking wells had higher health risks, including cancer.

Given this toll of drilling damage, the prudent and precautionary response would be to halt fracking wherever it's already happening and ban new fracking. But instead, the oil and gas industry is seeking to expand fracking at a frenzied pace, even into areas which provide drinking water for millions of Americans.

In light of the foregoing, we urge you to take two immediate steps to protect families and communities on the frontlines of fracking: First, you should call to close the loopholes that make fracking exempt from key provisions of our nation's bedrock environmental and public health laws, including our nation's hazardous waste law, the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA). Second, please heed the

recommendation of your administration's fracking advisory committee and declare sensitive areas – including places that provide drinking water for millions of Americans – as "off-limits" to fracking.

We as health professionals are also calling for a ban on fracking and its toxic waste here in Massachusetts. With the prospect of fracking coming to the Pioneer Valley, and of billions of gallons of toxic wastewater next door if fracking is allowed in New York, we need to stop the fracking threat now.

Left unchecked, fracking will soon emerge as one of the greatest environmental health threats we have faced in a generation. We urge you to take action now.

Sincerely,

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