

WINONA COUNTY, AFTER YEARS OF WORKING WITH THE COUNTY OFFICIALS, WINS A BAN ON FRAC SAND MINING IN THE COUNTY. READ THE NEWS RELEASE FROM THE LAND STEWARDSHIP PROJECT!



*.....keeping
watch on the
industry*

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Photo by Ted Auch, Frac Tracker

RELEASE: In Historic Vote, Winona County

Board Passes Ban on Frac Sand Operations

New Measure is First Known Countywide Frac Sand Ban

11/22/16

WINONA, Minn. -- The Winona County Board of Commissioners voted tonight to pass a ban on any new frac sand mining, processing, storage or transport operations in the southeastern Minnesota county's jurisdiction. This step comes after a 17-month grassroots organizing campaign by county residents calling for a ban, led by members of the Land Stewardship Project (LSP).

For years, Winona County has been heavily targeted by the oil, gas and frac sand industry's attempts to extract silica sand for use in hydraulic fracturing. Thousands of residents have opposed frac sand development due to its harmful impacts on the land, as well as on public health, safety and quality of life in local communities.

In June 2015, LSP members and supporters from across the county, many from neighborhoods that began fighting frac sand proposals several years earlier, set a goal of banning the industry outright, working to get Winona County to

become the first county to do so.

“We felt a ban was needed for the health and well-being of people and the environment,” said Warren Township resident Barb Nelson. “And the vast majority of residents in the county agreed. I hope other counties are encouraged by the step we’ve taken to take a firm stand against the frac sand industry.”

During Winona County’s process of considering the ban this summer and fall, an average of 80 percent of public comments received were in favor of the ban.

“The bluffs here are full of the kind of sand this industry wants,” said Joe Morse of Wilson Township. “We’ve seen what’s happened where the frac sand industry operates in Wisconsin — bluffs are leveled and the landscape is destroyed. Winona County residents love the natural beauty of this land and want to protect it.”

Members of LSP’s Winona County Organizing Committee applauded the passage of the ban as a major victory for people and the land and as an example of local democracy at its best.

“I feel grateful we have a County Board with the wisdom to listen to the people they were elected

to serve, and make the decision to prioritize public health and safety over the profit of a few,” said Wiscoy Township resident Kelley Stanage.

The County Board passed the ban by a 3-2 vote in the form of an amendment to Winona County’s existing zoning ordinance. It prohibits any new operations for the production of industrial minerals, including the silica sand used in hydraulic fracturing.

“I am relieved that we have protected our water and our vulnerable populations from frac sand operations,” said Lynnea Pfohl, a resident of Homer Township. “As a mother of young children, it’s also important to me that we were able to take this step locally towards tackling climate change, by putting our sand off limits for oil and gas production.”

While the overwhelming majority of public input from Winona County residents consistently favored the ban, the measure was fiercely opposed by the Minnesota Industrial Sand Council and other representatives of the frac sand industry.

“The story here is one of local residents taking on outside corporate interests bent on exploiting our communities and the land,” said LSP organizer Johanna Rupprecht. In Winona County, we’ve shown that people power can defeat corporate power. People can win when we organize and work together.”

CONGRATULATIONS TO WINONA COUNTY, MN.

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Welcome to the Frac Sand Sentinel, a newsletter highlighting resource links, news media accounts, blog posts, correspondence, observations and opinions gathered regarding local actions on, and impacts of, the developing frac sand mining and processing industries.

The content of this newsletter is for informational purposes only. The editor of the Frac Sand Sentinel does not accept any responsibility or liability for the use or misuse of the content of this newsletter or reliance by any persons on the newsletters contents.

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