

Frac Sand Sentinel

...keeping watch on the industry

Issue 3: SUPPLEMENT

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Sandra Steingraber and I have been in communication for several months She has graciously shared her remarks made at the Shale Gas Outrage Rally in Philadelphia. She has granted permission of the comments for inclusion in the Frac Sand Sentinel. You will note her focus on Midwest frac sand used in the hydraulic fracturing process practiced in the Marcellus Shale in PA. We are indebted to her for sharing this “exclusive” and the work she is doing on behalf of all Midwesterners who are supplying frac sand to an already devastated area that continues to show the effects of the industry.

Thank you Sandra for the copy of your presentation!

Prepared Remarks for Shale Gas Outrage Rally, Philadelphia, September 20, 2012

I am Sandra Steingraber of the Finger Lakes. I carry with me today ferocious opposition to the traveling horror show called *fracking* from the people of New York.

And to all my fellow Quakers in the crowd, I bring warm greetings from the Ithaca Monthly Meeting of Friends.

For Quakers, bearing witness and speaking truth to power are articles of faith. Never has there been a need for such testimony more than now, and no one does it better than the people of Pennsylvania.

In the face of gag orders, you have raised your voices.

In the face of non-disclosure agreements, you have disclosed.

In the face of bought-off political leaders, a defeatist environmental movement, and silence-of-the-lambs journalism, you have researched, investigated, and reported. You have inquired, objected, warned, and demanded. You have told your stories in the halls of power, and in the basements of churches, and in the streets.

You have lit your taps on fire and let the water speak.

I am here to say thank you.

I am here to say that it matters.

I know this because it was the story of Craig and Julie Sautner of Dimock, PA that first opened my eyes to effects of fracking on people's lives.

* * *

So, let me tell you my story. In this jar is the bedrock of my childhood home along the banks of the Illinois River—or, more accurately, the blown-apart remnants of that bedrock.

It's silica sand—the Samson of sand grains—and it came from a 10-acre wide, 10-story deep pit that, before the fracking boom, was a sandy meadow on the outskirts of my favorite state park.

That whole riverside region—along with all the sand counties of Wisconsin and Minnesota—are being turned inside out for the strip-mining of silica sand.

Inside this jar is the agent of fracking. The water you hear so much about is just the delivery system to blast these sand grains into the shards of shattered shale, propping

open the fractures so the gas bubbles can flow out—along with the benzene, the radon, the toluene, and a thousand other bats out of Pandora’s box.

Inside of this OTHER jar is the same sand—after it’s been washed and treated at a facility located a half-hour from my home in New York so that it can be transported to Pennsylvania and used for fracking.

Thus, the beloved landscape of my childhood home is being dismantled and carted off for storage in my children’s childhood home en route to destroy the bedrock and the landscape of Pennsylvania’s children.

Inside both of these jars is a known carcinogen: silica dust. Silica dust causes lung cancer—just like asbestos. That’s one reason that fracking jobs are killing jobs.

I know about carcinogens. I grew up drinking them in my tap water. I was diagnosed with bladder cancer at the age of 20. At last count, I have undergone 93 cystoscopes, and I am only one data point in a cluster of cancers in my sandy hometown.

It is my job to make sure that my own two children do not become cancer data points in their hometown. That’s every parent’s job: to keep our children safe. That is why I founded New Yorkers Against Fracking, and that is why I will never surrender in the fight to keep fracking out of the state that borders you to the north.

* * *

Now let me tell you the story we are going to write together.

It’s about the people of the Midwestern sand hills standing up to say, “We do not consent to the transformation of our land into weapon of mass destruction to be turned against the people living on top of the Marcellus Shale.”

This story is about the people of New York saying NO to an industry that turns our land into a staging ground for the destruction of yours.

This story is about the people of Pennsylvania rising up, like the partisans of the French Resistance, under terrible circumstances and exposing the atrocity of extreme fossil fuel extraction.

This story is about all of us together writing the future of our nation in which light bulbs and tea kettles do not require lighting toxic fossils on fire, and energy independence doesn’t require poisoning air, water, or workers.

It’s about creating together an unfractured future for our children, and I am honored to be an author of that story with all of you.

Thank you.

[Here is a note written by Sandra regarding the POSITION PAPER she and Dr. Kathleen Nolan have written on the application of a Health Impact Assessment for fracking.](#)

Hi, everyone.

On behalf of New Yorkers Against Fracking, Dr. Kathleen Nolan and I have written a position paper on the application of a Health Impact Assessment for fracking. The fully referenced report is posted here: <http://nyagainstfracking.org/>.

The Back Story:

As you know, Governor Cuomo has announced that our temporary moratorium on fracking will not be lifted until health effects are studied. His announcement is a direct result of intense and sustained pressure from our grassroots movement, which has engaged the medical and scientific community in our collective opposition. The gas industry, unhappy about this delay, is exerting intense counter-pressure.

However, rather than commission an independent, comprehensive Health Impact Assessment (HIA)--a set of

protocols recommended by the World Health Organization and our own U.S. Centers for Disease Control-- Governor Cuomo has directed New York's state Department of Health (DOH) to review an ad-hoc study of some kind (no one has seen it) conducted by our state Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) .

The attached position paper makes the case for a comprehensive, transparent HIA conducted by an independent team of investigators. We denounce the decision to allow the fate of 19.5 million New Yorkers to hinge on the results of a hasty, secretive "review" conducted by two state agencies led by political appointees.

Our position paper:

While specific to the political situation in New York, we hope the description of a Health Impact Assessment and the health effects analysis in this paper will be useful to our anti-fracking colleagues elsewhere. We also explicate five other reasons for a ban on fracking in NYS, apart from the possible health effects.

The key message of this paper: We have spent four years discussing the possible impacts of fracking on roads and trees, as part of the sGEIS process. The health of New Yorkers deserves equal attention. Any health effects that are identified through an aggressive investigation and that are not eliminate-able should serve to stop the approval of fracking.

You are free to distribute.

New Yorkers Against Fracking held a press conference in Albany earlier today where we also released a letter to the Governor written by pediatrician Larysa Dyrszka and signed by dozens of health professionals and healthcare advocates. This letter echoes the call for a comprehensive HIA. Signatories include luminaries such as David Carpenter, MD, School of Public Health at SUNY Albany, and Philip Landrigan, MD, dean at Mt. Sinai and director of the Children's Environmental Health Center. Many members of the press were in attendance, so stay tuned for coverage. Dr. Dyrszka is continuing to solicit signatures. Medical scientists and health professionals interested in the letter can read it here: <http://ecowatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/letter.pdf>

Kind regards,

Sandra Steingraber

Here is the summary statement of our paper:

Four years of study and thousands of pages have been devoted to the study of fracking's impact on New York's environment, but no such analysis has been carried out for public health. A thorough investigation of fracking's impact on human health is desperately needed. Still unanswered are three fundamental questions: Will fracking sicken and kill more New Yorkers than it employs? Will the sick and dying have any recourse—other than fleeing their homes and jobs—to protect themselves? And how much will that morbidity and mortality cost? New Yorkers Against Fracking joins the call for a comprehensive Health Impact Assessment (HIA) to determine what high-volume horizontal hydraulic fracturing would mean for the health of New Yorkers. Designed in accord with national and international health guidelines and inclusive of public participation, a comprehensive HIA is the widely accepted standard for prospective health studies. This HIA should include quantitative and economic analyses and must be led by an independent team of expert researchers untethered to gas industry funding or state agencies led by political appointees. An expedient, ad-hoc "review" that is not carried out with transparency and public input and that does not follow the established protocols of a comprehensive HIA is unacceptable. Any public health impact identified during a course of careful study as an unresolvable problem must, by the Governor's own standards, serve to halt the entry of fracking in New York State.

