

# MYTHS VS. FACTS

## ABOUT DOMESTIC ENERGY PRODUCTION

Hydraulic fracturing has been used in California for more than 60 years. Consistent with the state's historical leadership in environmental protections, policymakers recently took the extra step of passing the most stringent production regulations and environmental protections of any state in the nation. Unfortunately, special interests opposed to domestic energy production are spreading misleading information and advocating for a ban in California. An outright ban is extreme, would increase our dependence on foreign oil from countries like Russia and others in the Middle East and rob California of significant economic potential, including hundreds of thousands of jobs and billions of dollars in annual tax revenues.

Hydraulic fracturing  
"is being done safely  
and responsibly  
[and] can unlock a  
lot of resources."

Sally Jewell, U.S.  
Secretary of the Interior  
10/28/14

**Myth:** Hydraulic fracturing is new, untested and dangerous.

**FACT:** Hydraulic fracturing has been used in California for more than 60 years. Most extraction in California is possible without hydraulic fracturing. But, when oil is trapped in tight rock formations, hydraulic fracturing creates hairline cracks in the rock that allow otherwise unreachable oil to be extracted.

**Myth:** Oil produced in California is not being consumed by Californians.

**FACT:** Californians consume all of the oil and gas generated in California, but demand forces us to import more than 60% of California's needed oil each year from other states and foreign countries. Hydraulic fracturing is helping to increase our energy independence by accessing in-state resources that keep our state moving.

**Myth:** California doesn't have regulations to protect the environment & communities from hydraulic fracturing.

**FACT:** In addition to the many federal, state and local regulatory agencies in place, California has the most transparent and stringent production regulations and environmental protections in the country. SB 4, signed into law in 2013, ensures science-based regulations are in place so that California can continue developing our domestic energy supplies while protecting the environment. Among its many provisions, SB 4 requires:

- An independent, science-based study of hydraulic fracturing
- The development of a comprehensive Environmental Impact Report (EIR)
- Mandatory public disclosure of the content of all chemicals used
- Well integrity testing before and after fracturing
- Regular testing of nearby drinking water sources
- Prior notification of surrounding land owners

**Myth:** Hydraulic fracturing uses a substantial amount of water and threatens our already scarce water supplies.

**FACT:** The amount of water used in hydraulic fracturing in California is quite low compared to other uses because water is typically used once during the life of a hydraulic fracturing well. In fact, all hydraulic fracturing in California in 2013 used the same amount of water needed to keep one golf course green for the year. In 2012, California used 64 million acre feet of water. Of that 64 million acre feet:

- 34 million acre feet were used for agricultural purposes
- 8.7 million acre feet were used on residential lawns
- 126,000 acre feet were needed to keep California's golf courses green
- 2,375 acre feet were used to fill California's residential swimming pools
- 300 acre feet were used for all hydraulic fracturing in the state

Because hydraulic fracturing produces water as well as oil, this extraction technique is actually a net water producer in California. This water is then either reinjected back into the ground, reused for industrial purposes or recycled for productive use.

**Myth:** Hydraulic fracturing pollutes our groundwater and soil, posing risks to nearby residents.

**FACT:** Opponents of energy independence and in-state oil production are trying to scare Californians with sensationalized and baseless claims. The fact is, hydraulic fracturing has occurred in California since the 1950s and during that time it has never been shown to adversely impact the state’s environment, drinking water supply or pose any risk to nearby residents.

- A landmark study in 2004 by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency concluded there was “little to no risk of fracturing fluid contaminating underground sources of drinking water during hydraulic fracturing.”
- In 2012, a study of the Inglewood Oil Field closely examined 14 environmental risk factors associated with hydraulic fracturing, including groundwater and earthquake risks, and concluded there were no adverse impacts to any.

“To be clear, no wells have been found to be contaminated...”

Dr. Steven Bohlen  
California Oil &  
Gas Supervisor,  
California Department  
of Conservation,  
2/2/15

**Myth:** Taking advantage of oil reserves will somehow slow or stop continued development of solar, wind and other alternative energy sources.

**FACT:** Stopping oil production in California doesn’t reduce our demand for energy, nor will it accelerate the development of alternative energy sources. It will simply force us to import much more foreign oil to keep our state in motion and our economy growing. California already has among the most ambitious renewable energy goals in the country. Existing laws, regulations and customer demand will ensure continued development and expansion of renewable resources. In the meantime, 96% of Californians’ transportation fuels are still petroleum based and California’s population is expected to increase by more than a quarter by 2050. Since California has substantial reserves, it would be unfortunate to increase our reliance on foreign oil and lose jobs and billions of dollars in tax revenue in the process.

**Myth:** Hydraulic fracturing is bad for the environment and will hurt efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHG).

**FACT:** Hydraulic fracturing is helping tap the country’s abundance of clean, natural gas reserves which has reduced the demand for more polluting energy sources such as coal. In fact, the U.S. Secretary of Energy has stated that “We are about halfway” to the president’s goal to cut greenhouse gas emissions and about “half of that is because of the substitution of natural gas for coal in the power sector” (Ernest Moniz 8/26/2013). A baseless ban in California would not only jeopardize our energy independence and billions of dollars in new revenue for schools, police, transportation and other key programs, but it could also lead to hysteria in other states and jeopardize natural gas production – and GHG reduction – nationwide.

“Our cars do drive 332.2 billion miles a year ... you can’t get to 333 billion miles without a lot of oil. What doesn’t come from here will come from a boat or a train. It’s coming.”

Jerry Brown  
Governor of California,  
5/18/14

The amount of energy released by hydraulic fracturing is “about the same amount of energy as a gallon of milk falling off a kitchen counter.”

Mark Zoback, Stanford University geophysics professor, adviser to U.S. Department of Energy, 6/19/12

**Myth:** Hydraulic fracturing increases the risk of earthquakes.

**FACT:** This is absurd. Thousands of wells have been hydraulically fractured since the 1950s, and a 2012 study of the Inglewood Oil Field in Los Angeles closely examined 14 specific environmental risk factors, including earthquake risks, and concluded there were no impacts to any of these areas as a result of this extraction technology.