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**Ahead of Hogan Administration Public Meeting, Don't Frack Maryland Coalition  
Renews Call for Fracking Ban in Maryland**

Cumberland, MD - A coalition of community groups, business leaders, environmental advocates, and western Maryland citizens rallied today outside a Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) public meeting on proposed regulations for hydraulic fracturing, also known as fracking. Members of the [Don't Frack Maryland](#) coalition are demanding that the Maryland General Assembly pass a permanent ban on fracking before the state's current, two-year moratorium expires in October 2017.

Earlier today, MDE released issue papers outlining how the department plans to address specific topics in forthcoming fracking regulations. The topics covered include air and water contamination, wastewater management, public health impacts, and others. These issue papers were to be discussed at the meeting in Cumberland, but residents had little time to review them.

"What's the point of having a meeting to discuss issue papers when we don't have time to read the papers before the meeting?" said **Jackie Sams, Cumberland resident and founder of Don't Frack Western Maryland**. "Governor Hogan is shutting a lot of people out of this process by releasing these papers at the last minute and not allowing sufficient time for review. While Governor Hogan has said he wants open communications with the public, this process is anything but that. It's clear that this administration can't be trusted to protect us from fracking, so the legislature needs to ban fracking before we get to that point."

Over [100 organizations](#) have endorsed the Don't Frack Maryland campaign and are calling for a ban on fracking in Maryland. Earlier this year, [Prince George's County](#) became the first Maryland locality to ban fracking since state lawmakers passed a two-year moratorium in 2015. The [town council of Friendsville](#) in Garrett County recently introduced a municipal fracking ban. Montgomery County and the town of Mountain Lake Park already have fracking bans in place.

"The movement to ban fracking in Maryland continues to grow and we are demanding action from our elected officials," said **Thomas Meyer, Senior Maryland Organizer for Food & Water Watch**. "Governor Hogan and his administration clearly have the best interest of the oil and gas industry in mind as they write these regulations, but if it is the goal of the Maryland General Assembly to actually protect the communities of this state, as it should be, then they have no choice but to pass a statewide ban on fracking

in 2017."

"When we first pressed for regulations to protect humans and the environment, we thought it might be possible," said **Paul Roberts, board president of Citizen Shale**. "Six years later, we see the communities in Pennsylvania dependent on charity for clean drinking water, and research linking fracking to everything from pulmonary disease and infant health problems to earthquakes. We do not believe MDE Sec. Grumbles or Gov. Hogan, who repeatedly calls for drilling, can protect us. We no longer believe 'safe fracking' is possible, and call upon the General Assembly to ban fracking in 2017."

More than 80 percent of peer-reviewed research on fracking has been released since January 2013, and [more than half since January 2014](#), after Maryland's shale advisory commission ended its review with no recommendation. Nearly [all of the research findings](#) show elevated risks to public health and air and water quality. Particularly alarming, some research indicates that proximity to fracked wells can lead to higher incidence of low birth weight babies and accompanying development issues.

"Studies have shown significant associations between proximity to fracking operations and adverse birth outcomes, including prematurity and low birth weights," said **Dr. Ann Bristow, a Garrett County resident and member of Governor Martin O'Malley's Marcellus Shale Safe Drilling Commission**. "No known 'safe distances' from fracking operations have been documented. Based on the varied mechanisms of human exposure, including spills, leaks, and intentional releases of hazardous compounds into air, water and soil, setbacks and other regulations simply cannot adequately protect the public. A ban on fracking is the only ethical option for our state."

"The only safe way to regulate fracking is to ban it altogether," said **Brooke Harper, Maryland Outreach Coordinator at the Chesapeake Climate Action Network**. "Not only does fracking threaten our air and water, family farms, and small businesses, but it also worsens climate change. As the Hogan administration entertains fracking regulations that would usher in harm to our communities and climate, the General Assembly must step in to pass a permanent ban."

"As an owner of a second home in Garrett County, I'm dismayed that the mountain retreat that we built may become surrounded by industrial fracking sites," said **Robin Broder, board member of Waterkeepers Chesapeake**. "A ban on fracking is needed to protect the local economy and private property values. More importantly, it is needed to protect the drinking water supplies of thousands of residents and tourists from toxic contamination from fracking activities. Evidence shows that regulations won't do that."

"Fracked gas is just another dirty fossil fuel that devastates and divides local communities, disrupts the climate and keeps us looking backward instead of forward," said **Elisabeth Hoffman of HoCo Climate Change**.

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