

Subject: STRONGLY OPPOSE SB0878

Dear Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee Members,

My name is Clare Buckle, and I am a resident of Western Maryland. I am writing to the Committee today to voice my strong opposition to SB0878 Oil and Natural Gas - Hydraulic Fracturing - Authorization. I am asking you to vote no on this bill.

I reside in Western Maryland and genuinely appreciate the opportunity to spend time amidst our beautiful streams and natural landscapes. I find great joy in exploring our wildlands and taking in the pristine environment surrounding us, which feels like a treasure in our backyard.

The majority's strong opposition to fracking was voiced in the years that led to the decision to ban fracking in 2017. This legislative decision was supported and signed by then-Governor Larry Hogan. I am angry that SB0878 was led without public knowledge and did not give us an opportunity to express our concerns and ask questions about its filing. I do not want to see Garrett County, where the Marcellus Shale intersects with Maryland, fracked to the detriment of our economic, environmental, and public health.

Studies link natural gas development to low birth weights, bloody noses, asthma, lymphoma, and childhood leukemia. The health issues are broad and attributed to ongoing gas emissions, chemicals used to extract the gas, and diesel exhaust from the heavy equipment needed during development. Following the development, gas emissions from wellheads are a permanent and persistent health risk. Citizens requested "flaring" notifications in Accident, which housed the underground gas storage facility. The practice releases dense emissions that can be harmful. The notifications give residents time to close their homes to the emissions.

The original estimate was that Garrett County would drill 438 wells by 2025, requiring 3.5 billion gallons of water to be removed from Garrett County's resources. The water is not reusable and will need to be disposed of. It is uncertain where disposals would occur. Common practice is drilling injection wells, forcing the wastewater back underground. A chemical cocktail is added to fracking water, making it toxic and a potential contaminant for aquifers. The Wolman Report, which studied water availability in Maryland, was never completed. Garrett County was not included in the report, leaving a gap in knowledge about available water.

Fracking will drain our resources and ultimately contradict the state's future goals and path to economic, environmental, and public health, most severely here in Garrett County. I urge you to vote no on SB0878. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Clare Buckle