

Dear Members of the Maryland Senate's Education, Energy, and Environment Committee,

When last you dealt with the fracking issue in 2017, Garrett Countians (though not our elected officials at that time) strongly opposed fracking in our pristine Mountain Maryland home. Our population is small compared to jurisdictions downstate, and so a handful of pro-big-oil legislators found it easy to write us off. In 2017 Garrett County may have been small potatoes, but the successful effort to ban fracking was a concerted effort by a wide swath of the community. We wrote letters, emails, social media posts, letters to the editor, letters and emails to Maryland Senators and Delegates, marched and protested and testified. With Herculean efforts by our community and widespread support from downstate, supermajorities in both chambers in the Maryland General Assembly became convinced that fracking is a bad idea and that we are much better off leaving that gas in the ground.

We are now even more convinced that fracking is the wrong solution for our energy challenges, near-term state budget woes, and long-term economic prospects.

Please try to convince the three sponsors of SB878 to withdraw it. Failing that, please kill the bill with all the prejudice you can muster. Make your vote unanimous. Make it so obvious to one and all that fracking is a dead issue that no politician will consider putting a pro-fracking proposal back on the table in the future.

Thank you for your consideration.

--Bob and Mary Helen Spear, Swanton, Garrett County, Maryland