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Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Testimony on: SB0878 “Oil and Natural Gas – Hydraulic Fracturing - Authorization”

Position: Unfavorable

Hearing Date: February 27, 2025

Valleys Planning Council, a non-profit that conserves land and resources, preserves historic character and maintains the rural feel and land uses in northwestern Baltimore County, urges an unfavorable report on SB0878, which would authorize hydraulic fracturing in Maryland.

- Fracking consumes an enormous amount of water. According to the USGS, a single well may require 9.7 million gallons of water. Depending on the type of well and rock formation, even more water may be required. This water is fresh water usually taken from groundwater and surface water resources.
- Fracking also risks polluting water resources through spills and leaks of fracking fluids, as well as the injecting fluids into poorly built wells. According to the EPA, nearly 10% of spills end up in bodies of water.
- When fluid is injected into rock to induce a fracture, there isn't complete control over where the fractures occur. It can easily link up with other faults and carry fluids to, potentially, drinking water supplies.
- Fracking can produce billions of gallons of wastewater that contains naturally occurring contaminants like benzene, salts, and heavy metals. This wastewater can contaminate the environment. If it's stored in open pits, it can spill, leak, or emit air pollution. Recycling wastewater is a challenge as it generates concentrated waste products. Wastewater is difficult to treat if companies don't disclose all the contents.
- Fracking releases methane, contributing to climate change. It emits other pollutants that can cause respiratory problems along with other health issues.
- Because fracking requires large amounts of land, habitat will be destroyed and wildlife will be disturbed. Long-term environmental cleanup costs will fall to Marylanders.

Fracking is a bad deal for Maryland. Valleys Planning Council urges an unfavorable report on SB0878.

Renée Hamidi
Executive Director
Valleys Planning Council

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