



Maryland Native Plant Society

APPRECIATION CONSERVATION EDUCATION

Testimony: SB878, Oil and Natural Gas - Hydraulic Fracturing – Authorization
Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment
Hearing Date: February 27, 2025
Position: Unfavorable

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and honorable members of the Committee,

The Maryland Native Plant Society (MNPS) strongly opposes Senate Bill 878, which would allow hydraulic fracturing, commonly known as fracking, of oil and natural gas in Maryland. Fracking is a significant threat to the health of the environment, native plants, and native animals. The Maryland legislature's wise decision to ban hydraulic fracturing in 2017 was supported and signed by Republican Governor Larry Hogan.

According to a University of Maryland School of Public Health Report, negative public health impacts from the development and production of hydraulic fracturing are highly likely due to the associated air, noise, and water pollution. The health and the continued existence of native plants and animals are also threatened by this pollution and disturbance.

The restoration and preservation of native plants and their habitats is a vital objective of MNPS. Fracking runs counter to this goal by converting natural areas into industrial zones; destroying aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems; and harming natural resources. The fracking process creates huge amounts of polluted wastewater, generates industrial noise levels, emits greenhouse gases like methane, and toxic air pollutants including nitrogen oxides, particulate matter, and volatile organic compounds. Fracking operations can lead to the loss of animal and plant habitats, species decline, migratory disruptions, and land degradation according to a study by the Yale School of Public Health.

Please protect our biological heritage for current and future generations. Native plants and animals deserve our support, and Maryland needs the ecosystem services that healthy natural habitats provide. We respectfully request you to continue the ban on fracking and oppose SB878.

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Resources:

<https://health.maryland.gov/phpa/OEHFP/EH/Shared%20Documents/Marcellus%20Shale/MDM%20MarcellusShalePublicHealthFinalReport08.15.2014.pdf>

<https://ysph.yale.edu/news-article/integrated-effort-needed-to-mitigate-fracking-while-protecting-both-humans-and-the-environment/>