

Petition and Transmittal Letter on Fracking Industry Nondisclosure Agreements

PETITION: Don't Let Fracking Companies Suppress Important Health Information

The oil and gas industry claims there's no proof that fracking harms human health, but it turns out they have worked to suppress important information through the use of nondisclosure agreements. These nondisclosure agreements require people to keep quiet about the harm caused by fracking in return for a payment of money.

We are calling on the American Petroleum Institute (API) and America's Natural Gas Alliance (ANGA) to ask its members to publicly disclose the number of these nondisclosure agreements, their location, and the reasons for each agreement. We are also asking them to allow those who have been silenced by these agreements to speak publicly about any concerns they may have about health-related issues.

The use of nondisclosure agreements is part of a larger strategy the industry is using to keep important information from the public on the health effects of unconventional natural gas development using fracking techniques. It is likely that API and ANGA members have signed hundreds, if not thousands, of these agreements with individuals whose water, health or property have been damaged by fracking.

For example, Bloomberg News, in its article, *Drillers Silence Fracking Claims With Sealed Settlements*, June 5, 2013, reports in that in "cases from Wyoming to Arkansas, Pennsylvania to Texas, drillers have agreed to cash settlements or property buyouts with people who say hydraulic fracturing, also known as fracking, ruined their water.... In most cases homeowners must agree to keep quiet."

Here are two of the cases cited by Bloomberg News:

- Laura Amos signed a confidentiality agreement with a drilling company as part of a financial settlement after she alleged a well blowout contaminated her family's drinking water and sickened her. When the state's oil and gas commission called her to testify about drilling-related tests, the drilling company she settled with threatened to sue her if she spoke to the commission.
- Chris and Stephanie Hollowich claimed that nearby fracking operations poisoned their water with chemicals used in fracking. The drilling company paid the Hollowiches \$750,000, required them to sign an affidavit stating there was no medical evidence their illnesses were related to fracking, and prohibited them from

ever speaking publicly about their experiences, as well as from ever speaking in opposition to hydraulic fracturing. The Hallowiches had disputed the drilling company finding that fracking had not contaminated their water.

We urge you to support this petition so that scientists and health professionals can better study the health effects of unconventional gas development and production.

This petition is also supported by Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility, Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments, Maryland Clean Water Action and Earthworks, and supported by Halt the Harm Network.

On May 10, 2016, this petition was delivered to:

- American Petroleum Institute
- America's Natural Gas Alliance
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The following letter was transmitted along with 9,436 petition signatures:

May 10, 2016

American Petroleum Institute
America's Natural Gas Alliance
Jack N. Gerard, President and CEO
American Petroleum Institute
1220 L Street, NW
Washington, DC 20005

Marty Durbin, President and CEO
America's Natural Gas Alliance
701 8th Street NW, Suite 800
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Mr. Gerard and Mr. Durbin:

We are calling on you to ask your members to publicly disclose:

- The number of non-disclosure agreements they have signed with individuals who claim unconventional natural gas development or fracking has harmed their health, contaminated their drinking water, or otherwise damaged their property; and,

- The location, and the specific reasons for each agreement.

We are also asking you to require that your members allow those who have been silenced by these agreements to speak publicly about any concerns they may have about fracking and their health.

We are concerned that your industry is using these agreements to intentionally suppress important information about the risks posed by hydraulic fracturing.

[The undersigned]