

# AMERICANS AGAINST FRACKING

August 22, 2013

Dear President Obama,

We were greatly encouraged by the speech you delivered in June on climate change, but we are writing to express our concern over your embrace of natural gas as a key part of your Climate Action Plan.

As you know, aggressive cuts in greenhouse gas emissions are essential if we are to successfully avoid catastrophic changes in the stability of our climate. Failing to achieve these cuts will severely impact the quality of life of our children and grandchildren. So we applaud your commitment to reducing U.S. carbon pollution and to ensuring that America becomes a leader in the global efforts necessary to address the climate crisis. However, your Climate Action Plan embraces hydraulic fracturing, or “fracking,” for natural gas, and we the undersigned believe this is a serious mistake. In your remarks, you called for the United States to become “the top natural gas producer because, in the medium term at least, it not only can provide safe, cheap power, but it can also help reduce our carbon emissions.” While it is true that burning natural gas instead of coal or oil reduces, to some extent, carbon dioxide emissions, carbon dioxide is not the only type of “carbon emissions” that result from natural gas development.

Methane, the primary constituent of natural gas, is a potent greenhouse gas, at least 25 times more efficient than carbon dioxide at trapping heat over a 100- year time frame, and it causes between 79 to 105 times the climate forcing of carbon dioxide over a 20-year time frame. Estimates vary widely as to how much methane leaks into the atmosphere as natural gas is extracted, processed, transported and distributed, hence it is far from clear that natural gas can “help reduce our carbon emissions” over the “medium term.”

In fact, independent estimates of methane leakage by researchers at the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration, using aircraft monitoring, suggest that the rates of methane leakage in at least two active natural gas fields are much higher than the U.S. Greenhouse Gas Inventory’s current estimate. The implication of these new independent estimates is that burning natural gas may actually increase carbon dioxide

equivalent emissions over the medium term, relative to burning coal for electricity and to burning petroleum to heat buildings or fuel transportation. Further, the findings imply that expanded use of natural gas, and thus accelerated drilling and fracking, could set off irreversible and exceedingly destructive tipping points in the climate system even sooner. Natural gas is still a fossil fuel that, when burned, produces significant amounts of carbon dioxide. In fact, even if methane leaks could be minimized to about 1 percent of what is produced, the International Energy Agency has estimated that a scenario of increased global dependence on natural gas would increase the global average temperature by 3.5° Celsius, or by about 6.3° Fahrenheit, by 2035.

Put simply, doubling down on unconventional natural gas development all across our country does little if anything to address carbon dioxide equivalent emissions, and may even make matters worse. And of course there has never been any pretense that widespread drilling and fracking for oil is anything but a disaster for our climate. While many decisions on fracking are made at the state or local level, the decision on federal lands is something you can directly impact. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) controls access to over 700 million acres of federally owned mineral rights, most of which is beneath federal public land and Indian land. Based on 2012 data, about 38 million acres of federal public land are leased, and each of the past four years the oil and gas industry has drilled over 3 thousand new wells, most of which will be or have been fracked. In addition to the many other public health, environmental and socioeconomic problems that accompany widespread drilling and fracking, the climate impact of drilling and fracking for oil and natural gas is a major reason why we are writing to ask you to stop permitting such activities on our public lands. Given the potential “ravages” of global climate change, as you have put it, it is critical that you use your executive authority not to expand or facilitate fracking on federal lands but to instead ban the practice.

Beyond the impacts on climate, drilling and fracking on federal lands threaten some of our most treasured natural places. Among the federal lands targeted for drilling and fracking are watersheds vital for the provision of clean drinking water for millions of Americans, such as the Shawnee National Forest in Illinois, Wayne National Forest in Ohio and George Washington National Forest in Virginia. Also targeted are federal lands near iconic national parks, such as Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado, Arches and Canyonlands National Parks in Utah, Sequoia National Park in California and so many others.

U.S. energy independence and energy security can be achieved through energy conservation, deployment of proven energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies, and through funding research and development to improve on these technologies. The current hype over natural gas, particularly artificially low U.S. natural

gas prices, threatens to keep the country from aggressively moving toward this future and maintains our current course toward catastrophic changes to our climate.

President Obama, on June 25th, you said: "So the question now is whether we will have the courage to act before it's too late. And how we answer will have a profound impact on the world that we leave behind not just to you, but to your children and to your grandchildren."

Today, we are asking you to recognize that drilling and fracking for oil and natural gas on public lands will not serve the best interests of our children and grandchildren. We urge you to ban fracking on all federal lands.

Sincerely,

## **National**

350.org

Breast Cancer Action

Center for Biological Diversity

Center for Health, Environment & Justice

Democracy for America

Family Farm Defenders

GreenFaith

Greenpeace

MoveOn.org

National Nurses United

Oil Change International

Organic Consumers Association

Post Carbon Institute

Progressive Democrats of America

Rainforest Action Network

Environmental Action

KyotoUSA

Global Exchange

No Fracking Way America

Land Stewardship Project

Friends of the Earth

article32.org (Idle No More)

CREDO

Food & Water Watch

Forecast the Facts

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, U.S. Section

Hands Across The Sand

Waterkeeper Alliance

## **Regional and Local**

Cook Inletkeeper  
Great Neck SANE/Peace Action  
Alabama Rivers Alliance  
Black Warrior Riverkeeper  
Friends of the Locust Fork River  
One World Adventure  
Southern Energy Network  
Wild South  
West Fork Group  
Physical for Social Responsibility – Arizona  
350Marin  
Citizens Coalition for a Safe Community  
Environmental Priorities Network  
MOMS Advocating Sustainability  
Russian Riverkeeper  
SanDiego350.org  
SLO Clean Water Action  
Transition Culver City  
Food Empowerment Project  
San Diego County Green Party  
Bay Localize  
Ballona Creek Renaissance  
Wild Equity Institute  
California Water Impact Network  
Occupy Monterey Peninsula  
Ecological Farming Association  
People United for Peace  
Baldwin Hills Oil Watch  
Transition San Francisco  
Green Party of Alameda County  
Whittier Hills Oil Watch  
San Francisco Baykeeper  
Progressive Democrats of the Santa Monica Mountains  
350 Bay Area  
Valley Democrats United  
West LA Democratic Club  
Santa Cruz WILPF  
Boulder County Citizens for Community Rights  
Citizens for a Healthy Community  
Citizens for Huerfano County  
Colorado Springs Citizens For Community Rights  
Conscious Global Leadership

Denver Community Rights  
Earth Guardians  
East Boulder County United  
Foodshed Productions  
Frack Free Colorado  
GrassRoots EnErgy Activist Network (GREEN)  
Lakewood Fracktivists  
Our Health, Our Future, Our Longmont  
Pikes Peak Alliance for the Future  
Save Our Snow Foundation  
Save The Poudre: Poudre Waterkeeper  
The Question Alliance  
Weld 350  
Erie Rising  
Frack Free Weld  
What the Frack?! Arapahoe  
350 Colorado  
South Florida Wildlands Association  
Preserve Our Paradise  
Transition Tallahassee  
Green Party of Florida  
Rethink Energy Florida  
Allergy & Asthma Diagnostic Treatment Center (Tallahassee)  
Freethinkers' Forum of the Unitarian Universalists Church of Tallahassee  
Walk With Warriors Inc.  
Allamakee County Protectors  
Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement  
Wild Idaho Rising Tide  
Silver Valley Waterkeeper  
Illinois People's Action  
Progressive Dems of America Greater Springfield Illinois  
SAFE-Southern Illinoisans Against Fracturing our Environment  
Kentucky Waterways Alliance  
Massachusetts Baykeeper, Inc.  
Climate Justice Hub  
Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church  
Save Western Maryland  
Neighbors of the Northwest Branch of the Anacostia River  
Blue Water Baltimore  
Citizen Shale  
SECAP  
Maryland Environmental Health Network  
Midshore Riverkeeper Conservancy  
Montgomery County Young Democrats  
Potomac Riverkeeper, Inc.  
Citizens Against Drilling on Public Land

Don't Frack Michigan  
Don't Frack West Michigan  
Friends of the Au Gres-Rifle Watershed  
Kent County Water Conservation  
Michigan Citizens for Water Conservation  
Michigan Student Sustainability Coalition  
Michigan Land Air Water Defense  
Save-The-Bluffs  
Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League  
Clean Air Carolina  
Clean Water for North Carolina  
Common Ground Green Building Center  
NC WARN  
No Fracking In Stokes  
River Guardian Foundation  
Save Our Sandhills  
Sewage Sludge Action Network  
Haw River Assembly  
Wild South  
350 NJ  
Citizens for a Clean Pompton Lakes  
CWA Local 1081  
Edison Wetlands Association  
Garden State Earth Institute  
Ironbound Community Corporation  
New Jersey Highlands Coalition  
NJ Friends of Clearwater  
NJ State Industrial Union Council  
North Jersey Chapter of Franciscan Response to Fracking  
North Jersey Pipeline Walkers  
North Jersey Public Policy Network  
WATERSPIRIT  
Coastal Monmouth Democratic Club  
CWA Local 1082  
Rutgers Initiative for Permaculture Education  
Sierra Skylands  
Essex/Passaic Green Party  
UU Legislative Ministry of NJ  
Bluewater Valley Downstream Alliance  
New Mexico Environmental Law Center  
Partnership for Earth Spirituality  
ProgressNow New Mexico  
The Earth First Initiative  
Southwest Environmental Center  
OLÉ  
WildEarth Guardians

Don't Frack Nevada  
Alliance for a Green Economy  
Berkshire Alliance for Sustainable Energy  
Cannonsville Coalition against Fracking  
Cantine's Island CoHousing Homeowners Assn.  
Catskill Citizens for Safe Energy  
Center for Sustainable Rural Communities  
Citizen Action of NY  
Citizens' Environmental Coalition  
City of Binghamton Residents Against Hydrofracking  
FrackFree Catskills  
Gas Free Seneca  
Groton Resource Awareness Coalition  
Middlefield Neighbors  
Mother's Project  
New Yorkers for Clean Water Inc.  
Olive Defense Against Fracking  
Operation Splash  
RAFT (Residents Against Fracking Tioga)  
Shandaken Democratic Committee  
Southern Cayuga anti-Fracking Alliance  
The Carbon Squeeze  
United for Action  
Vestal Residents for Safe Energy  
West 80s Neighborhood Association  
Western NY Drilling Defense  
Advocates for Cherry Valley, Inc.  
Sullivan Alliance for Sustainable Development  
Frack Action  
Catskill Heritage Alliance  
Catskills Live! Trails & Wilderness Association  
Catskill Mountainkeeper  
M.K. Gandhi Institute for Nonviolence  
Parrots for Peace  
NYPIRG  
Korean Americans for Political Advancement (KAPA)  
Peace Action Manhattan  
Elmirans & Friends Against Fracking  
Ostego 2000  
Lower East Side Coalition to Stop Hydraulic Fracturing  
First Presbyterian Church  
Hudson River Sloop Clearwater  
Strike Anywhere Performance Ensemble  
Rockland Youth Environmental Society  
The Learning Sustainability Campaign/GreenWatch  
Stewart Park and Reserve Coalition

Beacon Climate Action  
Peace Action Bay Ridge  
WESPAC Foundation  
WNY Peace Center  
Three Parks Independent Democrats  
Chenango County Peace Action  
Friends of Butternuts  
Rochester Defense Against Fracking  
Coalition Against the Rockaway Pipeline  
NYC Friends of Clearwater  
Green Zionist Alliance  
Capital District Against Fracking  
Concerned Residents of Oxford (New York)  
StopMCS  
BigWaterNY  
People for a Healthy Environment, Inc  
New Yorkers Against Fracking  
Sullivan Area Citizens for Responsible Energy Development SACRED)  
Village of Cooperstown New York  
Athens County Fracking Action Network  
Buckeye Forest Council  
Concerned Citizens of Medina County  
Concerned Citizens of Summit County Ohio  
Concerned Citizens Ohio/Shalersville  
Faith Communities Together for frac Awareness (FaCT)  
FreshWater Accountability Project Ohio  
NEOGAP (Network for Oil and Gas Accountability and Protection)  
Frac Action Columbus (FrAC)  
SW Ohio No Frack Forum  
Frackfree Mahoning  
Sierra Club - Portage Trail Group Ohio  
Oklahomans for Clean Energy  
LEAD Agency, Inc  
Environment and Human Rights Advisory  
Columbia Pacific Common Sense  
Rogue Riverkeeper  
Berks Gas Truth  
Damascus Citizens for Sustainability  
Delaware Riverkeeper Network  
Marcellus Protest  
Peach Bottom Concerned Citizens Group  
Residents of Crumhorn/Milford Doers  
Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia  
Stewards of the Lower Susquehanna, Inc.  
United Sludge Free Alliance  
Pennsylvania Alliance for Clean Water and Air



Citizens Against Marcellus Pollution  
Energy Justice Network  
Mountain Watershed Association  
Lehigh Valley Gas Truth  
Winyah Rivers Foundation  
Coalition for a Frack-Free Tennessee  
Tennessee Citizens for Wilderness Planning  
Tennessee Clean Water Network  
FracDallas  
Midwest Environmental Advocates  
Pheasant Walk Permaculture  
Milwaukee Riverkeeper  
Concerned Chippewa Citizens  
Hale No to Frac Sand Mining in Western WI  
Maiden Rock Concerned Citizens  
Preserve Trempealeau County  
Citizen of USA and Wisconsin  
Wisconsin Grassroots Network  
Wisconsin Environmental Initiative  
Crawford Stewardship Project  
Jackson County Citizen Voices  
Save The Hills Alliance, Inc.

