

# ***NEW MEXICO SENATE DEMOCRATS***

For immediate release

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## **BILL SEEKS AN EMERGENCY BAN ON “FRACKING” IN NEW MEXICO**

A Senate bill would prohibit the practice of horizontal hydraulic fracturing to harvest oil and natural gas in New Mexico. Senate Bill 547, introduced by Senator William Soules (D, Dona Ana, District 37) would amend the Oil and Gas Act to prohibit the controversial technique, more commonly known as fracking.

Horizontal hydraulic fracturing involves the high-pressure injection of millions of gallons of chemically laced fluid down vertical drill holes into rock formations to crack the adjoining solid walls at the bottom to release oil and gas. Fracking is currently exempt from the federal Clean Water Act and has been going on in New Mexico for decades. The latest techniques, which are more intensive and dangerous today, have prompted a drilling frenzy facilitated by a lack of government oversight.

“It is critical that this act take effect immediately to protect New Mexico’s natural heritage and the health of New Mexicans,” said Senator Soules. “We just don’t know enough about the impact fracking has on the long term health of our land. Once the health of our land and people is compromised, it is nearly impossible to restore.

“New Mexico deserves a healthy future, and fracking jeopardizes that future.”

Compounding the dilemma of modern fracking in the Land of Enchantment is a recent U.S. Environmental Protection Agency report that identifies the San Juan Basin operations in northwestern New Mexico, conducted by ConocoPhillips, as the second-most prolific greenhouse-gas polluter in the nation among onshore oil and gas systems.

Eleanor Bravo, the New Mexico organizer for the consumer advocacy group Food & Water Watch, said that state and local governments have verified more than 1,000 cases of water contamination near drilling sites across New Mexico.

“Despite, documented human health risks, and the litany of ‘fraccidents’ across the state and country growing every day, it’s hard to believe that federal and state regulators continue to turn a blind eye to the problems caused by fracking,” Bravo said. “New Mexico’s air, water, soil and public health are not commodities to be squandered for the sole purpose of bolstering oil and gas companies’ bottom lines. This is why several New Mexico municipalities are working to pass local ban ordinances and why we need SB 547 to pass.”