

June 14, 2016

My name is Ronald Wilcox and I reside in Fairfax County, Virginia.

Thank you for affording me the opportunity to offer my comments today. The issue of American energy independence is important for our economy, and it is crucial that we prioritize the sustainability of our oil and gas production, based upon the sound science behind the safety record of hydraulic fracturing.

That record spans more than 70 years, and in 2016, hopefully seven decades of data have brought us to the point where the EPA can attest to the widespread safety of this practice.

That long record of observational data is reflected in the findings of the EPA.

The conclusion of the EPA's Draft Assessment last June was an important step forward for American energy production. Ensuring that we are able to maximize our energy potential by allowing the energy industry to safely operate free from the encumbrances of unnecessary over-regulation is a clear mark of progress.

That conclusion is one which was not reached lightly, but rather, represented the investment of over five years of rigorous analysis and reviews of more than 900 scientific studies.

Those studies have confirmed that hydraulic fracturing can be done in an environmentally responsible way.

As time goes on, other regulatory agencies are reaching similar conclusions. Just last month, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management and the Bureau of Safety and Environmental

Enforcement found no significant environmental effects of hydraulic fracturing off the California shores.

The joint study by these two federal agencies was based on 30 years of analysis and 23 different offshore hydraulic fracturing operations. The exhaustive study concluded there would be no significant impact on the water quality or the health of the ocean, and further indicates that fracking presents only a minimal risk when performed according to industry standards.

Indeed, the clean-burning natural gas produced through hydraulic fracturing will play an indispensable role in meeting the energy and environmental needs of the United States in the 21st century.

As the demand for energy continues to grow, the abundance of natural gas has helped keep America's fuel blend affordable and clean. Hydraulic fracturing has lowered electricity bills for families and provided an affordable energy foundation for the creation and maintenance of American jobs in an increasingly global economy.

By bringing online previously unexploitable reserves, hydraulic fracturing has also lessened America's dependence on foreign energy sources, much to the benefit of our economy, our national security, and the world's environment.

By onshoring this clean and responsible means of energy production, we avoid offshoring jobs or pushing energy production overseas where environmental safeguards may be lax compared to the United States.

With all this in mind, I hope you will reaffirm the conclusion that fracking poses no systemic risk to groundwater. Thank you.