

ROBERT P. CASEY, JR.  
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# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 4, 2011

Mr. Edward Hanlon  
Designated Federal Officer  
EPA Science Advisory Board (1400F)  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20460

Dear Mr. Hanlon:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Draft Hydraulic Fracturing Study Plan. As I mentioned in my February 22, 2011 to Administrator Jackson, I am very pleased to see that the EPA has released its draft plan to study the potential impacts of hydraulic fracturing on drinking water for review by EPA's Science Advisory Board. I support the development of domestic natural gas extraction and believe that it has the potential to produce significant environmental and economic benefits. It is my hope that this study will provide some of the science needed for it to be done in a safe and responsible manner.

While hydraulic fracturing has been in use for over 50 years, it is a markedly different technology from previous decades. It is now used in conjunction with horizontal drilling, in a much greater proportion of wells drilled, uses much larger total amounts of water and chemicals, and is rapidly expanding in geographic scope, most notably in the Marcellus Shale. Past practices and performance are not necessarily relatable to potential impacts on drinking water resources. More robust scientific information is critically needed to avoid any adverse consequences to public health and to ensure that natural gas is produced in a safe and environmentally sound manner. I believe that science needs to be the underlying basis for policy decisions, and support EPA's study of hydraulic fracturing's impacts on drinking water resources.

There is a lot at stake with EPA's Study, I believe it should be the most comprehensive study on all potential impacts of hydraulic fracturing on water resources as possible. I commend the planned full water lifecycle approach that EPA will take in conducting the study. It is imperative that we better understand everything around hydraulic fracturing practices, beginning with site selection and water acquisition through the management, treatment and reuse of flowback water.

I strongly urge the EPA to devote sufficient resources to complete the study as broadly and as promptly as possible. As stated in my February 22 letter, I also urge the EPA to select multiple locations in Pennsylvania for both retrospective and prospective case studies. And thank you for your continued work on resolving this important issue.

Sincerely,

Robert P. Casey, Jr.  
United States Senator