

**EPA Science Advisory Board
Hydraulic Fracturing Research Advisory Panel
Public Teleconference December 3, 2015
Oral Statement of Mark Ruffalo**

ORAL COMMENTS FOR: EPA-HQ-OA-2015-0245

My name is Mark Ruffalo, I am an actor and the Founder of an organization called Water Defense. The impetus for Water Defense came from the water contamination issues created by hydraulic fracturing in Dimock, PA. Since that time, Water Defense has been dedicated to the protection of clean water from industrial degradation. There can be no doubt that hydraulic fracturing is a source of industrial contamination affecting our water. Water Defense has done testing in Pennsylvania, and found the presence of Acetone and Toluene in tap water and water that is used to shower and bath.

One of the largest concerns I have with the draft assessment is the following statement from the Executive Summary: “We did not find evidence that these mechanisms have led to widespread, systemic impacts on drinking water resources in the United States.” My organization and I believe that this downplays the potentially catastrophic effects that hydraulic fracturing can and will have on local communities. The statement seems to conclude that because hydraulic fracturing is not having an effect on drinking water *everywhere*, it is not a widespread issue. It fails to recognize that the water contamination caused by hydraulic fracturing can happen *anywhere* and the effects of it are devastating. Furthermore, just because it doesn’t affect *everyone* doesn’t mean that its consequences are acceptable. America is a democracy, and therefore it is our responsibility to regulate to protect the groups of people who are or may be affected by the catastrophic effects that fracking can have on drinking water.

The EPA report states that contamination has occurred in some instances; but this alone should be enough to put a stop to hydraulic fracturing. To say that local aquatic resources are not affected by hydraulic fracturing most of the time is not good enough; the impacts that it *can* have leave Americans without clean water. Documented instances of water contamination are high enough to represent a clear and present risk. For example, if only 5% of the population gets cancer when exposed to a substance, that substance is pulled off the market.

Water Defense has been to every major water contamination site in the last two years doing testing alongside the testing conducted by State agencies and the EPA. We have found that testing done by these bodies are not only not looking for known chemicals that are used in or released by fracking, but their testing is woefully incomplete in that it generates limited data points. For example, many tests conducted by state and federal agencies take grab samples from the surface of the water only, and neglect to measure contamination below the surface. This leads to non-detects for toxic, cancer-causing chemicals that then come into contact with unsuspecting citizens when they drink water or take a shower.

Water is not the only thing that is contaminated by the fracking industry. The entire system has been contaminated and gamed to be predisposed to non-detects by the undue influence of the oil and gas industry. Government agencies are supposed to be independent and objective, but the influence that oil and gas companies have on legislators, regulators, and agencies is obvious.

The last point I'd like to make is this: the EPA in general, and this study in particular, suffers from a lack of credibility in the eyes of the public. In order to remediate this, the EPA should invite all of those individuals and organizations from the public who feel harmed by fracking to speak at a public hearing. Their voices need to be heard. There is evidence of a widespread and systemic cover-up of contamination events. What is increasingly clear across Pennsylvania, Wyoming, and West Texas is that there are many people that are dealing with contamination that have effectively had their voices stifled. There should be an amnesty of folks who have been forced to silence their voices through non-disclosure agreements. The fact that these people have been barred from sharing their stories is the antithesis of the American democratic ideal.

Thank you for your time.