

## **A Resolution of the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany to Oppose the Current Practice of Hydraulic Fracturing and Support the Widespread Adoption of Renewable Energy**

- I. Whereas horizontal high-volume hydraulic fracturing (“fracking”) is a **recently-developed technology for extracting methane gas from shale** by injecting large quantities of water, toxic chemicals, and sand under high pressure;
- II. Whereas the members of the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany, New York have **studied and discussed** health, environmental, economic, and policy aspects of fracking in light of Unitarian Universalist principles;
- III. Whereas, based on our belief in the **inherent worth and dignity of every person**, we are concerned that fracking endangers human health because it uses, without proper safeguards, toxic chemicals that are known to cause cancer, birth defects, and other illnesses;
- IV. Whereas, respecting the **interdependent web of all existence** of which we are a part, we are concerned that fracking endangers the environment, posing risks of methane and toxic chemicals seeping into ground water supplies; of methane and radon emissions into the air; of induced seismic activity; and of inadequately stored waste fracking fluid contaminating the soil, streams, and rivers;
- V. Whereas, believing in **justice, equity and compassion in human relations**, we are concerned that communities and rural residents subjected to fracking disproportionately suffer environmental and health consequences without equitably sharing in the financial benefits enjoyed by the industry;
- VI. Whereas, believing in the **right of conscience and the use of the democratic process**, we are concerned that State law is inherently unfair and unjust because (under Compulsory Integration) it can compel landowners who oppose fracking to submit to horizontal drilling beneath their property;
- VII. Whereas, notwithstanding industry claims that best available technology can effectively eliminate any health and environmental adverse impacts of fracking, there is **neither sufficient incentive to industry nor sufficient governmental enforcement resources** to ensure that such technology is actually used and maintained;
- VIII. Whereas, from a long-term perspective, the **methane that has existed within shale formations since early geologic time will reside there** until alternative technologies are developed for its safe extraction and may not need to be exploited at all if renewable energy sources are pursued with urgency;

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THEREFORE, be it RESOLVED that the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany, New York is opposed to hydraulic fracturing in our community, state, nation, and around the world **until the following conditions are met** that would make the practice consistent with Unitarian Universalist Principles:

1. **The rights of all affected parties**—including, but not limited to, land owners, proximate land owners, well-owners, drillers, and their employees, community residents and those at risk of being adversely affected by drilling operations' impact on the air, land and water—**are fully protected** by enforced legislation and regulation and are truly indemnified by well owners against any harm resulting from these operations now and in the future.
2. **Sufficient fees and taxes are imposed** on hydraulic fracturing operations to support close oversight and regulation of such operations and to pay for local expenses, such as road repair, environmental clean up, and evacuations.
3. All **exemptions** of hydraulic fracturing operations from environmental laws and regulations **are eliminated**, including, in the U.S., exemptions from the Clean Air, Clean Water, and Safe Drinking Water Acts and from employee-safety regulations. One consequence of removing exemptions would be the requirement to identify all chemicals used in the process and to eliminate those that are hazardous.

Be it further RESOLVED that the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany, New York calls for **legislation requiring substantial energy conservation** and accelerating the **development of renewable energy resources**, to reduce dependence on fossil fuels (and the need for fracking) and **avoid** the disastrous effects of **global warming**.