

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

- I. **Whereas**, horizontal high-volume hydraulic fracturing (“fracking”) is a recently-developed technology for the extraction of methane gas from shale, involving the injection of large quantities of water, toxic chemicals, and sand into the shale under high pressure;
- II. **Whereas, based on our belief in the inherent worth and dignity of every person**, we have **health** concerns with fracking, since industry claims that fracking does not endanger human health are neither supported by scientific studies nor consistent with documented incidents of contamination and sickness in Pennsylvania and other areas where fracking is practiced, and since many of the chemicals used are known to cause birth defects;
- III. **Whereas, in our respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part**, we have **environmental** concerns with fracking, with the risks of methane and toxic chemicals migrating into ground water supplies; of methane and radon emissions into the air; of induced seismic activity; of contamination of the soil, streams, and rivers resulting from inadequate means of storage and disposal of waste fracking fluid;
- IV. **Whereas, believing in justice, equity and compassion in human relations**, we are concerned by **economic** aspects of fracking, with an industrialized landscape created by the large-scale proliferation of fracking threatening to supplant existing and emerging economies that offer hope for a sustainable future, including locally-owned family farms, wineries, organic agriculture, outdoor recreation, ecotourism, and businesses rooted in the rich history and rural heritage of New York;
- V. **Whereas, believing in the right of conscience and the use of the democratic process**, we are further concerned by **legal and fairness** issues with fracking, since under current state law, Compulsory Integration can force landowners who oppose fracking to allow horizontal drilling beneath their property, and since communities and rural areas subjected to fracking disproportionately suffer the consequences without equitably sharing in the financial benefits enjoyed by the industry;
- VI. **Whereas**, from a long-term perspective, the methane that has existed within shale formations since early geologic time will still reside there if and when alternative technologies are developed for its safe extraction, and may not need to be exploited at all—if, instead, **energy conservation** measures and the **development of renewable**, non-polluting energy sources are pursued with urgency and commitment to wean our economy and society away from fossil fuels and avoid disastrous effects of climate change;

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**Therefore be it RESOLVED** that The First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany, NY is opposed to hydraulic fracturing in our community, state, nation, and around the world at least 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, landowners, proximate landowners, 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, clean up, court costs, and evacuations.
3. All exemptions of hydraulic fracturing operations from environmental laws and regulations, including all provisions of the Clean Air and Clean Water acts, as well as OSHA regulations are eliminated. One consequence of removing exemptions would be the requirement to identify all chemicals used in the process and to eliminate those that are harmful.
4. Any additional oil and gas production is conducted as part of a state and federal policy requiring substantial energy conservation and transition from fossil fuels to renewable, sustainable energy. An essential element of this policy must be the requirement to transfer all government incentives for fossil fuel production to conservation measures and renewable energy development.

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This is a draft; **the finished document depends on you**. Suggestions and comments are desired. Please submit to Sandy at [ssteub@gmail.com](mailto:ssteub@gmail.com) or place written remarks in the Green Sanctuary mail slot at the bottom of the mail boxes. Thanks!