



## California Sued for Allegedly Failing to Regulate Fracking

By Karen Gullo  
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California was sued for allegedly failing to regulate and supervise hydraulic fracturing by oil and gas companies under the state's underground injection control program.

The Center For Biological Diversity, a Tucson, Arizona-based environmental group, said in a complaint filed in state court in Oakland today that the program requires the state to obtain detailed studies, conduct inspections and supervise testing before any subsurface injection or disposal project can begin.

“Despite these statutory and regulatory mandates, and despite the fact that hydraulic fracturing clearly constitutes ‘injection,’” the oil and gas division of California’s Department of Conservation “follows a pattern and practice of allowing hydraulic fracturing to occur without notice, tracking or supervision,” according to the complaint.

Hydraulic fracturing, known as fracking, involves forcing millions of gallons

of chemically treated water underground to break up rock and free trapped natural gas. The practice has sparked environmental concerns and lawsuits all over the country.

The Center for Biological Diversity has a pending lawsuit against California, the nation’s third-largest oil-producing state, seeking to block approval of new oil and gas wells because regulators have allegedly failed to consider or evaluate the risks of the practice.

### Draft Regulations

California regulators will require oil and natural gas companies to disclose plans to use fracking 10 days in advance, under draft regulations released in December. If the rules are adopted, the division of oil, gas and geothermal resources will post public notice of well locations three days before fracturing begins. The state doesn’t currently require companies to reveal fracking plans.

The lawsuit seeks court orders declaring the conservation department to be in violation of state laws and prohibiting

fracking of oil and gas wells that violate state underground injection rules. Ed Wilson, a spokesman for the conservation department, didn’t immediately return a message seeking comment on the filing.

The case is Center for Biological Diversity v. California, RG13664534, California Superior Court, Alameda County (Oakland).