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# Los Angeles Times

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## Proposal for fracking moratorium advances in state Senate

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By Patrick McGreevy  
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SACRAMENTO -- A bill that would place a moratorium on the use of hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, in oil drilling in California was approved by a state Senate panel on Tuesday.

The measure was passed by a bare majority of five votes by the Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee after some Democrats abstained and Chairwoman Fran Pavley (D-Agoura Hills) provided a courtesy vote to keep the issue alive for more discussions that could end up changing the bill.

Fracking involves pumping water and chemicals under high pressure into the ground to free up oil trapped in rock formations. Pavley is the author of a bill approved last year that requires disclosure of the location and chemicals used in fracking operations and requires a study of the effects of fracking.



Pump jacks draw petroleum from the ground in an oil field over the Monterey Shale formation in Kern County, where gas and oil extraction using hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, is on the verge of a boom.

(David McNew / Getty Images / March 24, 2014)

Sen. Ricardo Lara (D-Bell Gardens) withheld his vote Tuesday, saying he wanted to allow Pavley's bill a chance to work before considering stronger measures such as the moratorium proposed by Sen. Holly Mitchell (D-Los Angeles).

"I think an outright ban or moratorium would put a lot of my constituents out of work," said Lara, whose district includes oil drilling operations in Signal Hill and Long Beach.

Mitchell said a moratorium was needed to allow a definitive study of the health effects of fracking on communities located nearby, including the Inglewood oil field in her district.

“The safety of this method of oil extraction has come into question by the populations who live and work near oil wells employing these methods of extraction,” Mitchell said. “Many believe it is polluting the air and water and endangering wildlife and public health.”

Republican Sens. Anthony Cannella of Ceres and Jean Fuller of Bakersfield voted against SB 1132.

“We don’t feel the evidence is there for a total moratorium for the entire state,” Fuller said, speaking on behalf of her constituents.