

## On Earth Day Pocan and Schakowsky Introduce Strongest Federal Fracking Ban in the U.S.

by Food & Water Watch

WASHINGTON - On Earth Day, U.S. Reps. Mark Pocan (D-WI) and Jan Schakowsky (D-IL), members of the Safe Climate Caucus, introduced the Protect Our Public Lands Act, H.R. 1902. The legislation is the strongest anti-fracking bill introduced in Congress to date and would ban fracking on public lands.

“Our national parks, forests and public lands are some of our most treasured places and need to be protected for future generations,” said Rep. Mark Pocan. “It is clear fracking has a detrimental impact on the environment and there are serious safety concerns associated with these type of wells. Until we fully understand the effects, the only way to avoid these risks is to halt fracking entirely. We should not allow short-term economic gain to harm our public lands, damage our communities or endanger workers.”

“Today is Earth Day – a time to renew our commitment to protecting the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the planet we all call home,” said Rep. Jan Schakowsky. “Our public lands have been preserved and protected by the federal government for over one hundred years. We owe it to future generations to maintain their natural beauty and rich biodiversity. I believe the only way to do that is to

enact the Protect Our Public Lands Act, and I will continue to fight to see that happen.”

“Our public lands are a shared national heritage, and shouldn’t be polluted, destroyed, and fracked to enrich the oil and gas industry,” said Wenonah Hauter, Executive Director of Food & Water Watch. “Ironically, the President is speaking in the Everglades today, a unique and fragile ecosystem that is threatened by nearby fracking on public land. Congress must follow Congressman Pocan and Congresswoman Schakowsky’s bold leadership and ban fracking on these lands, so that future generations can enjoy these special places.”

Mounting evidence shows that fracking threatens our air, water and public health. To make matters worse, reports have shown that existing fracking wells on public lands aren’t being adequately inspected, creating even more potential for disastrous accidents. Right now, about 90 percent of federally managed lands are available for oil and gas leasing, while only 10 percent are reserved for conservation, recreation, wildlife and cultural heritage.

The Protect our Public Lands Act, H.R. 1902 prohibits fracking, the use of fracking fluid, and acidization for the extraction of oil and gas on public lands for any lease

issued, renewed, or readjusted. The legislation is endorsed by the Food and Water Watch, the American Sustainable Business Council, Environment America, Friends of the Earth, Center for Biological Diversity, Progressive Democrats of America.

“We applaud Congressman Pocan for his leadership on protecting the environment and moving us forward to reducing our carbon footprint,” said Andrea Miller, Executive Director of Progressive Democrats of America. “This bill has our full support.”

“Fracking is dangerous to human health, massively contributes to global warming and simply should not be occurring on US public lands owned by all Americans. This historic bill will help lead us to a better future,” said Bill Snape Senior Counsel at the Center for Biological Diversity.

“Instead of being fracked, our public lands should be treasured as pristine and sacred places,” said Kate DeAngelis, climate and energy campaigner at Friends of the Earth. “This bill would be an important first step in protecting both our unique wilderness spaces and public health from fossil fuel extraction. Next we must go further to ensure that all fossil fuels are left in the ground to avert the worst impacts of climate disruption.”

“Carbon pollution is making people sick and killing people, and it is particularly people of color and the poor who are most impacted, we must stand up to fight both poverty and pollution at the same time,” said Reverend Lennox Yearwood, Hip Hop Caucus. “We can stop hurting the most vulnerable with carbon pollution. We can and we must, it is our moral obligation.”

“We’ve seen fracking contaminate our drinking water, put our families health at risk, and turn our treasured open spaces into industrial zones,” said Sarah Frost, Environment America’s Outreach Director, Stop Fracking our Future. “Environment America applauds Representatives Pocan and Schakowsky and the co-sponsors of POPLA on their effort to protect our country’s most precious and protected public lands from fracking. Some places are just too precious to drill and frack, and that includes our parks, canyons, and forests.

Americans Against Fracking also organized a sign on letter in support of the bill, which already has over 400 organizational sign ons.