



**JOINT HEARING SENATE NATURAL RESOURCES AND WATER
AND ASSEMBLY NATURAL RESOURCES**

SENATOR PAVLEY AND ASSEMBLY MEMBER WILLIAMS, Chairs

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My name is Sue Chiang, I'm the Pollution Prevention Director at the Center for Environmental Health (CEH). CEH is a leading national nonprofit committed to ending health threats from toxic chemicals in our air, water, food and in products we use every day. We represent thousands of Americans who care deeply about the human health and environmental risks from hydraulic fracturing (fracking) and other types of oil and gas development.

I would like to thank Senator Pavley and Assembly Member Williams in calling for this Joint Hearing to explore how the state will incorporate the findings and recommendations from the California Council on Science and Technology (CCST) independent study on well stimulation treatments. It is shocking that the oil and gas industry has been allowed to operate for so long with virtually no oversight or attention being paid to the impacts their operations may have on public health.

CEH co-authored two peer-reviewed studies last year, both of which point to signs of harm from fracking and oil and gas development. One study was the first to document air pollution in several locations around the US near fracking operations, in some cases showing higher levels of cancer-causing chemicals in the air than allowed under government clean air standards. The second study highlighted threats to young children and pregnant women who live near fracking sites, including higher risks of birth defects, infertility, miscarriage, impaired fetal growth, low birth weight, preterm birth and premature or delayed sexual development, among other health problems.

Here in California, CEH has already found that fracking waste water from Seneca Resources contains levels of naphthalene, benzene and ethylbenzene – all substances listed by the state as known to cause cancer and/or serious reproductive health problems – far in excess of Proposition 65 safety standards. For example, some of the waste water injected into a potential source of drinking water by Seneca contains more than 2,000 times more benzene than allowed under Prop 65.

The CCST report points out that there are many aspects of fracking and other oil and gas development processes that pose potential serious health risks to human health and the environment. The repeated reference in the CCST report of significant data gaps is cause for concern - when the authors state that they have "found no evidence" of various problems related to fracking, they also repeatedly note that there are significant data gaps; In other words, the report found "no evidence" of certain problems because essentially no one has looked for any evidence.

We need to turn around the notion that the oil and gas industry's operations should be assumed safe and that the public should bear the burden of proof to demonstrate that fracking is harming our health and our environment. Public health is about preventing harm - the science is behind and needs to catch up to the rapid pace of expansion of this industry.

The CCST report found that "many of the constituents used in and emitted by oil and gas development can damage health, and place disproportionate risks on sensitive populations, including children, pregnant women, the elderly and those with pre-existing respiratory and cardiovascular conditions". It called out how emissions concentrated near all O&G production could present health hazards to nearby communities in CA.

There is enough cause for concern that the state should halt fracking and other risky oil and gas operations now until the industry can demonstrate that it can be done safely. In addition, we strongly support the CCST recommendation that the state evaluate the public health impacts of production for all oil and gas development, rather than just the portion of production enabled by well stimulation. Thank you.