

First Presbyterian Church
Cooperstown, New York 13326

Session Resolution on Horizontal High-Volume Hydraulic Fracturing

Whereas, as people of faith, we believe that God is the creator of the earth, its abundant resources, all humankind, and the rich diversity of life that inhabits this world;

Whereas, we are entrusted by God to be good stewards of the planet, which requires that resources of land, air, and water be managed responsibly and sustainably, without destroying or despoiling God's creation;

Whereas, consistent with the teachings of Christ, we have a moral obligation to prevent harm to our fellow human beings, including future generations who will inherit the earth;

Whereas, horizontal high-volume hydraulic fracturing ("fracking") is a recently-developed technology for the extraction of methane gas from shale rock, involving the injection of large quantities of water or other fluids, toxic chemicals, and propanants into the ground under explosive pressure to create and hold open fractures in gas-bearing shale;

Whereas, new information has emerged regarding the significant dangers of fracking, causing independent experts to conclude that the technology poses a serious risk of immediate, long-term, or even permanent harm to land, air, and water resources; said harm occurring through the migration of methane and toxic chemicals into groundwater supplies, airborne gas and chemical emissions, induced seismic activity, disposal of fracking fluids, and the widespread fragmentation of ecosystems and loss of wildlife caused by large-scale proliferation of drilling sites and related infrastructure;

Whereas, new information has emerged regarding incidents of contamination and sickness in Pennsylvania and other areas where fracking has occurred, leading medical professionals to question industry claims that natural gas can be extracted safely without endangering human health;

Whereas, an industrialized landscape created by the large-scale proliferation of fracking threatens to supplant existing and emerging economies which offer hope for a more sustainable future, protective of the earth and people, including but not limited to locally-owned family farms, wineries, organic agriculture, outdoor recreation, ecotourism, and businesses rooted in the rich history and rural heritage of upstate New York;

Whereas, due to the political, legal, and regulatory framework in which the fossil fuel industry presently operates, communities that have been subjected to intense and widespread fossil fuel extraction, including fracking, disproportionately suffer the consequences of extraction through environmental injustice and social-economic exploitation, without equitably sharing in the financial benefits enjoyed by industry;

Whereas, recognizing that natural gas has existed within shale formations since early geologic time and will continue to reside there should alternative technologies be developed for its safe extraction in the future, it is imprudent and morally objectionable to proceed with current methods of fracking in light of the inherent and significant risks posed to the environment, human health, and society.

Now, therefore be it resolved this 21st day of May, 2012 by the Session of the First Presbyterian Church of Cooperstown the following:

1. The Session opposes current methods of horizontal high-volume hydraulic fracturing and supports local and statewide bans on use of the technology.
2. The Session encourages the development of sustainable economies, renewable energy, and conservation measures so that New York State may serve as an example of good stewardship for the earth and an advocate for the well-being of its inhabitants.
3. The Session urges the members of the congregation to support this resolution with concrete actions and encourages other faith communities to join with us in its support.