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SENATE BILL 6345

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State of Washington

65th Legislature

2018 Regular Session

By Senators Billig, Carlyle, Ranker, Van De Wege, Chase, Darneille, Hasegawa, Hunt, Keiser, Palumbo, and Rolfes

Read first time 01/12/18. Referred to Committee on Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources & Parks.

1 AN ACT Relating to the use of hydraulic fracturing in the  
2 exploration for and production of oil and natural gas; adding a new  
3 section to chapter 78.52 RCW; and creating a new section.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that hydraulic  
6 fracturing of underground formations for the removal of oil and gas  
7 deposits is a relatively new technology whose long-term impacts upon  
8 human health and environmental quality are largely unknown. This  
9 technology requires large quantities of fracking fluids containing  
10 chemicals that are exempt from public disclosure and which may  
11 contaminate groundwater and surface waters used as drinking water  
12 supplies. Each well in which hydraulic fracturing is employed  
13 requires more than one million gallons of water per year, with the  
14 average well using from three to eight million gallons of water over  
15 its lifetime. In many areas of the state, the existing groundwater  
16 supplies and surface water sources are fully appropriated, and such  
17 large new demands would threaten existing uses for agriculture,  
18 industrial, and municipal purposes.

19 The legislature further finds that as much as ninety percent of  
20 the fracking fluids must be disposed of following use in the fracking  
21 well, with most of this fluid subsequently returned following limited

1 treatment back into underground injection wells. Very little is known  
2 at this time regarding the impact that these disposed fluids may have  
3 upon groundwater aquifers and the potential adverse human health  
4 impacts from such exposure.

5 Other adverse environmental impacts have also been identified in  
6 hydraulic fracturing. Large quantities of methane are released in  
7 this process, which is both a toxic pollutant as well as a very  
8 potent greenhouse gas. Hydraulic fracturing is also suspected to be  
9 the source of increased seismicity in some regions with numerous  
10 wells.

11 For these reasons, the legislature intends that the state take a  
12 precautionary approach to the employment of hydraulic fracturing by  
13 first requiring a review of the studies and experience regarding use  
14 of this technology in other states. Following completion of this  
15 review, the legislature will have the opportunity to direct that  
16 sufficient regulatory standards be in place prior to the termination  
17 of the moratorium established in this legislation.

18 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 78.52  
19 RCW to read as follows:

20 (1) Until December 31, 2028, a moratorium is imposed on the use  
21 of hydraulic fracturing in the exploration for and production of oil  
22 and natural gas.

23 (2)(a) The department must conduct a literature review of  
24 existing scientific research examining the use of hydraulic  
25 fracturing in the exploration for and production of oil and natural  
26 gas. In consultation with the department of ecology, federal  
27 agencies, and other interested parties, the department must assess  
28 the potential use of hydraulic fracturing in the state and analyze  
29 hydraulic fracturing research regarding:

- 30 (i) Potential impacts on public health and the environment;  
31 (ii) Effects on groundwater and air quality; and  
32 (iii) Current policies and regulations implemented by other  
33 states.

34 (b) By December 31, 2023, the department must submit a report to  
35 the legislature including the results of the literature review and  
36 recommendations on permitting the use hydraulic fracturing in the  
37 exploration for and production of oil and natural gas.

38 (3) For the purposes of this section, "hydraulic fracturing"  
39 means the process of pumping a fluid into or under the surface of the

1 ground in order to create fractures in rock for the purpose of the  
2 production or recovery of oil or natural gas.

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