

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5145

As Amended by House, April 17, 2019

Title: An act relating to the use of hydraulic fracturing in the exploration for and production of oil and natural gas.

Brief Description: Concerning the use of hydraulic fracturing in the exploration for and production of oil and natural gas.

Sponsors: Senators Salomon, Nguyen, Dhingra, Rolfes, Frockt, Hunt, Billig, Darneille, Palumbo, Kuderer, Saldaña and Van De Wege.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources & Parks: 1/29/19, 1/31/19 [DP, DNP].

Floor Activity:

Passed Senate: 2/13/19, 29-18.

Passed House: 4/17/19, 61-37.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Prohibits use of hydraulic fracturing for exploring for, and producing oil and natural gas.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, WATER, NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Van De Wege, Chair; Salomon, Vice Chair; McCoy and Rolfes.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Warnick, Ranking Member; Honeyford and Short.

Staff: Karen Epps (786-7424)

Background: Hydraulic fracturing is frequently used to enhance oil and gas production from underground rock formations. During hydraulic fracturing, hydraulic fracturing fluid is injected down an oil or gas production well and into the targeted rock formation under

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pressures great enough to fracture oil and gas-bearing rock. The hydraulic fracturing fluid usually carries proppant, typically sand, into the newly-created fractures to prop the fractures open. After hydraulic fracturing, oil, gas, and other fluids flow through the fractures and up the production well to the surface.

Currently, there is no oil and gas production in Washington. However there are many areas of the state that have attracted exploration since 1900 when the first exploration well was drilled. About 600 exploratory gas and oil wells have been drilled in Washington, but large-scale commercial production has never occurred. No oil or gas have been produced in Washington State for decades. Exploration has resulted in the successful development of a natural gas storage reservoir.

Summary of Bill: The Legislature finds that hydraulic fracturing of underground formations for the removal of oil and gas deposits is a relatively new technology whose long-term impacts upon human health and environmental quality are largely unknown.

The use of hydraulic fracturing for exploring for, and producing oil and natural gas is prohibited.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Hydraulic fracking technology requires large quantities of fracking fluids with chemicals that can contaminate ground and surface waters, and the long term impacts on human health are not known. Each well where hydraulic fracking is used requires more than one million gallons of water per year, so that could threaten existing water uses for agriculture and industry. A ban is needed to protect the aquifers. It is important to stop this forced dependency to fossil fuels. A ban is needed because if there was fracking in our state there would be contaminated water, more earthquakes, and trailing ponds that kill wildlife. This bill protects the state from the disasters of fracking.

CON: There is no natural gas production in Washington State and no prospects of any future natural gas production. Hydraulic fracking is a fundamentally safe technology and if it were proposed in Washington State, it would be well regulated. There is no evidence of water quality degradation to any drinking water wells and it is not legal to put hydraulic fracking wells in an area that could connect to a drinking water well.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Jesse Salomon, Prime Sponsor; Victoria Leistman, Sierra Club; Nikie Walters; Joanna Schoettler.

CON: Jessica Spiegel, WSPA; Dan Kirschner, Northwest Gas Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.

EFFECT OF HOUSE AMENDMENT(S):

- Provides that the ban on the use of hydraulic fracturing for oil and natural gas does not prohibit the use of hydraulic fracturing for other purposes.
- Removes intent section.