

Interior Secretary Jewell calls out fracking bans as antithetical to U.S. interests

By ACSH Staff — January 5, 2015



In an interview with [radio station KQED](#) ^[1] in California's Bay Area a

hotbed of anti-chemical precaution, and on a NPR station as well! Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell warned against scattershot local bans of hydraulic fracturing of shale to recover entrapped fossil fuels, mainly natural gas (fracking). President Obama's chief custodian of federal lands says local and regional bans on fracking are taking regulation of oil and gas recovery in the wrong direction.

I would say that is the wrong way to go...I think it's going to be very difficult for industry to figure out what the rules are if different counties have different rules.

In November, two California counties added themselves to a growing list of [local bans on hydraulic fracturing](#) ^[2]. Voters approved measures in San Benito and Mendocino Counties by wide margins, and (in seeming defiance of the official advisory) the Los Angeles city attorney is drafting a moratorium for consideration by the city council. Officials in Monterey County are also considering placing a fracking ban on the ballot in 2015.

Secretary Jewell did not fail to notice the recent, long-pondered move by NYS Gov. Andrew Cuomo to ban fracking in the state: in her interview, she pointed out that the move did not sit especially well with her, who, as a former petroleum engineer, has hands-on experience with fracking. There is a lot of misinformation about fracking, Jewell said. I think that localized efforts or statewide efforts in many cases don't understand the science behind it and I think there needs to be more science.

Jewell continues, What we need is sound science that is driving our decision-making, and as a regulator that is exactly what we're relying on as we are looking at releasing our own fracking regulations, which are out for public comment.

One commenter on the station's site had this comment: Jewell is a petroleum engineer by trade

and training, so I can't help but think she's seriously biased right from the get (*sic*).

ACSH's Dr. Gil Ross added this perspective: While it's encouraging to see Secretary Jewell opining in this manner, it will be far better if the Administration walks the walk rather than talks the talk. Ms. Jewell referred to this when she referred to our own fracking regulations...out for public comment. She and her boss are going to get lots and lots of comments featuring unsupported but widespread fears of this process. Let us hope that she applies the wisdom she's gleaned over her years in the field to put our nation's best interests over the loud-mouthed fractavists and the media folks who love them as opposed to our own Gov. Cuomo, who clearly kowtowed to this rabble-roused bunch of technophobes and utopian wind-and-sun-only groups.

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Links

[1] <http://blogs.kqed.org/science/2015/01/02/interior-secretary-local-fracking-bans-are-wrong-way-to-go/>

[2] <http://blogs.kqed.org/science/2014/11/05/new-california-county-fracking-bans-likely-to-face-challenges/>