

# GET THE FRACK

# OUT OF EDINBURG



*Editor's note: The following is a letter that circulated within the Edinburg community organizing in response to the Royal Production Company's submission of a new natural gas well permit application that was scheduled to be heard by the Edinburg City Council on July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2015. As this issue goes to press, Royal has delayed its permit application. However, as we all know, fracking companies often find a way to drill where they wish by biding their time and working clandestinely to get what they want.*

## Dear Neighbors and Community Members,



There is a plan to permit and place an oil / fracking well in our neighborhood in Edinburg! This well is to be situated near the corner of Canton and Jackson Rd. between Freddy Gonzalez and Canterbury Elementary schools. Fracking works by drilling a well down into the Earth and then drilling horizontally (or sideways) beneath the other properties around the well. The wells can drill over 1 mile sideways! These wells pump on average 4.5 million gallons of toxic-laced fluid into the ground, release toxic gases, and cause explosions, spills, and earthquakes. It will leave millions of gallons of toxic liquid and tons of air born pollutants behind—much of it directly beneath our homes and all of it centered right between two elementary schools. This will not only damage our health but our property values, also.

### WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Join & invite friends to the Facebook group **'Say No to Oil Drilling and Fracking at Canton and Jackson.'**
- Email and call the Edinburg mayor, city council, and the planning and zoning director. Tell them not to permit this well. Their information is at the end of this letter.
- Watch the film 'Gasland' on Netflix, Youtube, or DVD to learn more the dangers of oil and fracking wells.

### DRILLING POLLUTES THE WATER, SOIL, AND AIR:

- A fracking well can pump up to 4,500,000 gallons of toxic fluid into the land and water.
- These chemicals cause cancer, illness, and even death: lead, uranium, mercury, ethylene glycol, radium, methanol, hydrochloric acid, and formaldehyde.
- There have been over 1,000 documented cases of water contamination next to areas of gas drilling as well as cases of sensory, respiratory, and neurological damage due to ingested contaminated water. There are likely many times more unreported and hidden cases. See the below picture of the water on fire for a sense of this pollution.
- Other pollutants released into the air and land include: benzene, toluene, xylene and ethyl benzene (BTEX), particulate matter and dust, smog, nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide, formaldehyde and heavy metals—exposure to these pollutants is known to cause short-term illness, cancer, organ damage, nervous system disorders and birth defects or even death.
- The Associated press reports that Wyoming's air quality near drilling sites is worse than Los Angeles'—with Wyoming ozone levels recorded at 124 parts per billion compared to the worst air day of the year for Los Angeles, at 114 parts per billion. The Environmental Protection Agency's maximum healthy limit is 75 parts per billion.
- Drilling is noisy! The highest noise levels would occur from drilling and flaring of gas. Noise from drilling has been measured as 115 dBA at the source to above 55 dBA at distances 1,800 feet to 3,500 feet from the well. Drilling noise would occur continuously for 24 hours per day for one to two months or more depending on the depth of the formation.

### WELLS CAUSE EXPLOSIVE BLOWOUTS, SPILLS, AND EARTHQUAKES:

- In the Dallas Forest Hill neighborhood a recent blow-out by the drilling company XTO killed one neighbor of the site and caused the evacuation of 500 homes.
- In Denton, a recent blow-out caused the employees to be

evacuated from the site because of the danger of explosion and the release of toxic gases, some of them illegal and banned. EagleRidge fracking company did not notify or evacuate residents until 12 hours after its own people had been evacuated to safety. In total at least 46 different toxic chemicals were in constant release into the air.

- There were 7,662 oil spills in the U.S. in 2013 with thousands more unreported. Over 20 per day. What would happen to your family, home, and property value if that happened here?
- Since fracking has started earthquakes above magnitude 3.0 in Texas went from 1.5 earthquakes a year to over 900. What damage would a tremor do to your house's foundation?

## DRILLING LOWERS HOME VALUES AND DAMAGES HOMES:

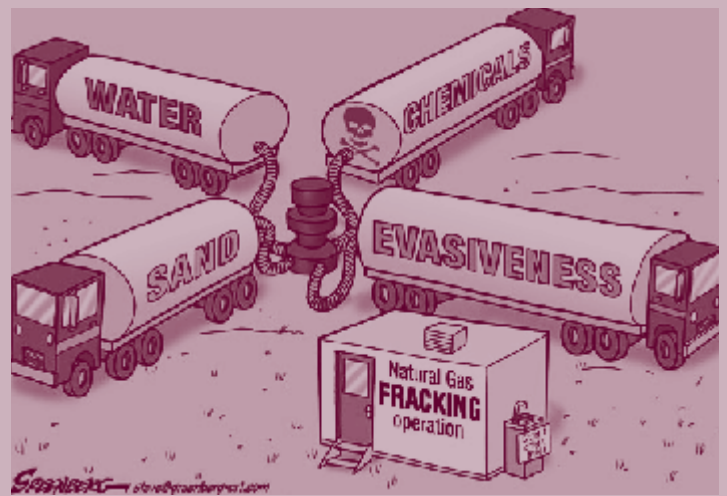
- In a 2013 University of Denver survey of 550 people in Texas, Alabama and Florida, a strong majority said they would decline to buy a home near a drilling site. The study, published in the Journal of Real Estate Literature, also showed that people bidding on homes near drilling locations reduced their bids up to 25%.
- Bottom line conclusion of the study is that drilling reduces prices by 5 to 15% on average.
- Insurance policies exclude anything having to do with "industrial operations" so you are out of luck getting them to reimburse damages to your walls and foundation from drilling vibration and earthquakes as well as blowouts, leaks, etc.

## DRILLING HURTS JOBS AND INCOME WHILE RAISING CRIME:

- The Headwaters Institute article entitled "Oil and Gas Extraction as an Economic Development Strategy" looks at the impacts of drilling booms since the 1980s in six states from 1980 – 2011. They found that:
- For counties that experience increases in oil and gas production, income declines over time by as much as \$7000 a person with longer specialization.
- The longer the duration of oil and gas specialization, the higher the crime rate.
- Educational attainment declines with longer specialization.

## THE BOTTOM LINE:

- Researchers at the Colorado School of Public Health, University of Colorado, assessed health risks to those residents living near fracking operations. Their basic conclusions were: the closer you live to drilling operations, the greater your health risk.
- We do not want classrooms, bedrooms, and backyards to become home to toxic land, water, and air.
- Fracking companies will tell you that they have health experts and inspections but that is not true. A 2012 paper was published in the journal, Environmental Health Perspectives. The researchers found that there was not one health expert among the 52 people comprising the various state and federal commissions and boards, even though public health was specified in the executive orders creating the committees.



## UPDATE

On June 14<sup>th</sup>, "Royal Production said it needed more time to address concerns raised by neighbors .... City officials said residents would be sent written notices when the permit will be heard by the council in the future... "We welcomed all the public input at the June 9th meeting and need more time to address all the issues raised adequately," wrote Matthew Hammer, geophysicist and exploration manager at Royal Production Company in a recent email. 'We still have a permit on file, but we're not going to be on the July 7 agenda,' Hammer said later." —(Natural gas company delays application for Edinburg well, TheMonitor.com)

## WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- Keep the heat on Edinburg City Officials to ensure that they will not quietly approve drilling in the future. Call and tell them you oppose the permit for drilling at Canton and Jackson!
  - Mayor Richard Garcia and the City Council: (956) 383-5661 :: aozuna@cityofedinburg.com
  - Edinburg City Council: (956) 388-8204 :: citysec@cityofedinburg.com
- Get involved! On **f** Join & Follow:
  - [www.facebook.com/saveRGVfromLNG](http://www.facebook.com/saveRGVfromLNG)
  - Say No to Oil Drilling and Fracking at Canton and Jackson! Facebook group ■