

Don't Believe the Hype



Fracking Kills

Fracking pollutes the water, soil and air; it uses massive amounts of water; it leaks methane and oil into the surrounding environment; the necessary massive truck traffic destroys roads and disrupts the lives of those unfortunate enough to live nearby. The methane leaks are a serious addition to the "greenhouse effect". Just for technical reasons alone – never mind the political control of the oil and gas industry – fracking can never be made safe!

The California Department of Conservation is carrying its dog-and-pony show around the state, pretending that it can and will regulate fracking to make it safe. Fracking can no more be made safe for the environment and human (and other animal) health than can mass murder be made humane.

- In 2012, oil worker Robert David Taylor was killed when the well field in Kern County where he was working opened up and swallowed him.
- Following that, the head of the California Department of Conservation (CDC), Robert Chernow, and Elena Miller, head of the Department of Gas and Geothermal Resources (DOGGR) basically halted granting new drill permits until this death and similar events could be properly investigated. But after the oil industry complained, Governor Jerry Brown fired the both of them.
- At an energy conference in March of that year, Gaurdie Banister, President and CEO of the oil company Aera Energy LLC, publicly saluted Brown for carrying out their orders. "You did what you said," he said, "and I just wanted to say 'thank you' publicly for that."*

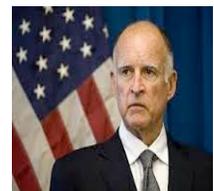
This story is no exception. It shows once again that the regulatory bodies never regulate the industry. Just like the federal Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (offshore oil drilling) or the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC – banking), the CDC and DOGGR are controlled by the industry it's supposed to regulate - the oil industry, just like Jerry Brown. Even if it were technically possible, they will never seriously regulate fracking.



Alternative

There is an alternative. In Seattle, avowed socialist candidate Kshama Sawant was just elected to the Seattle City Council, beating 16 year liberal Democratic incumbent Richard Conlin. Sawant campaigned on the issue of the environment along with some of the other issues that working class people feel and care about: A \$15 per hour minimum wage (even that isn't enough!), affordable housing, etc. We should prepare now to run our own candidates – separate from and opposed to the two big business parties, in the 2014 elections – candidates that run like Sawant did and also include issues like socialized medicine, no more cuts in social services, no privatization, end the mass incarceration of black and Latino people, etc.

The Real Jerry Brown



"Before Jerry Brown signed legislation last month that promises to greatly expand fracking in California, the governor accepted at least \$2.49 million in financial donations over the past several years from oil and natural gas interests, according to public records on file with the Secretary of State's Office and the California Fair Political Practices Commission" (East Bay Express, 10/2/13)

The problem is capitalism itself! We need a system based on human need, not private profit. We need a democratic socialist society.

*Oakland Socialist Group
part of Workers International Network*

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*See the Sacramento Bee, 5/3/2012, available online here: <https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?ui=2&ik=147398c189&view=lg&msg=13dc1f0034513928> for this entire story.