
From: Samuel Hicken <sam@samhicken.info>
Sent: Friday, November 10, 2017 8:58 AM
To: Sidney Hill
Subject: Comments on the Proposed Sandoval County Oil and Gas Ordinance

Dear Mr. Hill:

I've resided at 6413 Vooscane Avenue in Cochiti Lake and been a Sandoval County taxpayer since 1999. Most of my work has been in Santa Fe, where I was Director of Bioinformatics for Phase-1 Molecular Toxicology and a consultant to the New Mexico Department of Health. I recently retired, and have since authored an award-winning science book.

I'm writing to express my personal and professional concern regarding the contents and handling of the so-called Stoddard Ordinance. The proposal seems opportunistically prepared, one-sided, and too quietly disseminated. While I've reviewed the specific economic and safety arguments on both sides of the fracking issue, I find them nearly meaningless because as statisticians say, "If you torture a statistic long enough you can get it to confess to anything." For every point there's a counterpoint, and hence we go round and round.

It's more useful, in my view, to look first at some clear meta-facts: a) Fracking involves toxic materials, heavy machinery, structural eyesores, noise, and subterranean destruction; b) Countries including France, Germany, and Ireland, along with several U.S. states, have chosen, after reviewing the same information available to Sandoval County, to ban fracking *completely*; and c) Lawsuits against fracking, and the resultant settlements, are mounting.

Like the tobacco and asbestos industries before them, fracking companies employ lobbyists, lawyers, and scientists—not to mention their checkbooks—to promote their product and contest its detriments. (I can imagine a TV ad, ten or twenty years from now, in which a law firm informs viewers that, "If you lived in an area subject to fracking, you may be entitled to significant compensation.")

As a constituent, scientist, and voter, I would expect any responsible fracking ordinance to encourage public input and to enforce a level of monitoring that ensured the safety and peace of mind of Sandoval County residents. Whereas oil and gas companies have teams of lobbyists, lawyers, and scientists to support their interests, Sandoval County residents have only one team, the Commission, sworn to uphold theirs. I thank you for that.

Sam Hicken, Ph.D.