

Leadership Voices on Gasland

There is no doubt that the movie Gasland has factual errors. Here is what key leadership voices around the country have to say about the facts that Josh Fox got wrong in the movie.

Natural gas development can and does exist in harmony with the environment. The natural gas community is committed to the safe and responsible development of this abundant resource and we take seriously our responsibility to preserve the environment.

Mike Hale, Film Critic, New York Times

Mr. Fox shows a general preference for vivid images . bright red Halliburton trucks, beeping but unidentified scientific instruments . over the more mundane crossing the top and dotting the map of investigative journalism.

- Source: New York Times, The costs of natural gas, including flaming water, June 20, 2010

Christopher Campbell, Film Critic, Moviefone

He meant to educate me on the issue he ultimately failed.

- Source: Cinematical Blog, Doc Talk: Do Documentaries Still Have Educational Value?, January 5, 2011

State of Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission

Because an informed public debate on hydraulic fracturing depends on accurate information, the Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission (COGCC) would like to correct several errors in the film's portrayal of the Colorado incidents.

- Source: State of Colorado Oil & Gas Conservation Commission, Correcting Gasland, <http://cogcc.state.co.us/library/GASLAND%20DOC.pdf>

Gasland incorrectly attributes several cases of water well contamination in Colorado to oil and gas development when our investigations determined that the wells in question contained biogenic methane that is not attributable to such development.

- Source: State of Colorado Oil & Gas Conservation Commission, Correcting Gasland, <http://cogcc.state.co.us/library/GASLAND%20DOC.pdf>

We concluded that Mike Markham's . . . well contained biogenic gas that was not related to oil and gas activity.. . COGCC records indicate little or no temporal relationship between the Markham . . . complaint and nearby drilling and hydraulic fracturing activities, which occurred several years earlier and in most cases many years earlier.

- Source: State of Colorado Oil & Gas Conservation Commission, Correcting Gasland, <http://cogcc.state.co.us/library/GASLAND%20DOC.pdf>

John Hanger, Secretary, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection

Gasland is "fundamentally dishonest" and "a deliberately false presentation for dramatic effect."

- Source: Philadelphia Inquirer, Gasland documentary fuels debate over natural gas extraction, June 23, 2010

Gasland talks about Dunkard Creek . an environmental disaster . but everything we know about Dunkard Creek at this point indicates the primary source of the problem was a coal mine in West Virginia.

- Source: Patriot News, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection chief defends regulation of Marcellus Shale drilling, September 11, 2010

Kiran Stacey, Financial Times

Fox's defence for any lack of rigour was that he wanted to start a debate, rather than have the last word. But that doesn't absolve him of the responsibility to thoroughly check his claims.

- Source: Financial Times, Gasland: A Review, January 18, 2011.

Ground Water Protection Council

Gasland stated that the Ground Water Protection Council refused an interview with [Josh Fox] regarding the practice known as hydraulic fracturing. This statement by the filmmakers was inaccurate. To our knowledge, no one representing the production company approached us for comment on this subject. Had Mr. Fox or his representatives contacted us, we would have been receptive to discussing this issue as we have on numerous occasions when contacted by media outlets.

- Source: Groundwater Protection Council Statement on Gasland, <http://gwpc.org/e-library/documents/general/GWPC%20and%20hydraulic%20fracturing.pdf>

John Shimkus, Blogger, Energy Digital

Suppose the best we can do is have more amateur filmmakers with zero expertise in the field they are documenting go out there and bring us the facts. Then we can pat them on the back and hand them an Oscar – but what could potentially be even more dangerous is using one of the most prestigious and well-recognized honors in the media world to promote an attack on a crucial sector – at least for the time being – in the world's quest for clean abundant energy.

- Source: Energy Digital, "Natural Gas Community Rallies Against Gasland Movie Oscar Nomination," January 26, 2011

Sen. Gene Yaw, Pennsylvania State Senator

A recent story by the Associated Press and material provided in the documentary, Gasland, has been misleading and at times, flat out wrong.

- Source: Milford Standard-Journal, "OP: We are watching drillers," January 25, 2011

Vincent Carroll, Reporter, Denver Post

In one scene replayed in the PBS report, for example, a man puts a flame to his faucet, which bursts into a ball of fire. Except for one problem: The man lives in Weld County, and his well has been thoroughly investigated by Colorado regulators – and specifically by scientists at the Colorado Oil & Gas Conservation Commission. Their verdict, issued Sept. 30, 2008: "There are no indications of any oil-and gas-related impacts to your water well." Tough luck, but no scandal.

- Source: The Denver Post, "Carroll: Gasland vs. Colorado," January 30, 2011

We can try to deal with the side effects [of energy production] reasonably, as Colorado and many states do, or we can spread fear. But if we want to take the reasonable approach, it will require first of all a recognition, in Colorado Oil & Gas Conservation Commission director David Nesline's words, that "just because someone can light their tap on fire doesn't mean their water has been contaminated by an oil or gas well."

- Source: The Denver Post, "Carroll: Gasland vs. Colorado," January 30, 2011

Mark Hemingway, Washington Examiner

For anyone who cares about the environment and the economy over glamour and gossip, the biggest Oscar surprise of 2011 is that the film Gasland was nominated for best documentary. While Hollywood is typically in the business of creating legends, one would expect films nominated for this particular Oscar to have some tangible relationship to the truth. You'd be very hard-pressed to say that about Gasland.

- Source: The Washington Examiner, "Nothing But Hot Air in Gasland," January 31, 2011

Whatever your political sympathies, you can't ignore the evidence that Gasland is pure propaganda, not a documentary.

- Source: The Washington Examiner, "Nothing But Hot Air in Gasland," January 31, 2011

Dr. Michael Economides, Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering, University of Houston

Sadly, the film's baseless claims and wild exaggerations have garnered significant media attention, coaxed policymakers to pass laws and regulations detrimental to economic development and energy security and, here's the kicker, led to it being recently nominated for an Academy Award in the feature documentary category. Given the lack of facts within the film, perhaps a nomination in the comedy direction category would be a better fit.

- Source: The Hill E2Wire Blog, "Defining Clean's the Energy Challenge," February 3, 2011

The Towanda Daily Review

If you want a relatively quick overview of the natural gas phenomenon, watch the 60 Minutes program. And by way of contrast, see "Gasland" and learn for yourself the difference between a responsible report and a hatchet job.

- Source: The Towanda Daily Review, "The Gas Boom: Be Smart About What you See, Hear," November 19, 2010

The Process of Hydraulic Fracturing:

Scott Anderson, Senior Policy Advisor, Environmental Defense Fund

I think in the vast majority of cases, if wells are constructed right and operated right, that hydraulic fracturing will not cause a problem. We think that states have every reason to be able to tackle this issue and do it well.

- Source: E&E News PM "EDF's Scott Anderson discusses fracking controversy," October 27, 2010

John Hanger, Secretary, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection

"Thus far, the DEP says they've found not one instance of underground contamination of well water from fracking. We haven't had frack fluid come back from thousands of feet down and get into people's drinking water supply."

- Source: KDKA-TV, "Marcellus Shale Drilling: Is It Safe?," October 16, 2010

Daniel Yergin, Pulitzer-Prize winning author and Chairman, IHS Cambridge Energy Research Associates

"(Hydraulic Fracturing) is simply the most significant energy innovation so far this century. As recently as 2007 it was widely thought that natural gas was in tight supply and the U.S. was going to become a growing importer of gas. But this outlook has been turned on its head by the shale gale."

- Source: Statement on report, "Fueling North America's Energy Future: The Unconventional Natural Gas Revolution and the Carbon Agenda Cambridge Energy," March 2010

Gary Hanson, Director, the Red River Watershed Management Institute at LSU-Shreveport

By addressing our water concerns in a proactive manner and allowing development to proceed in a responsible way, we are a model to other areas of the country where unfortunately, fear, instead of facts, is driving resistance to shale gas development," Hanson said.

- Source: Haynesville Shale News, "Successes in shale to be shared," September 7, 2010

Dr. Charles Groat, Director of the Energy and Earth Resources Graduate Program, University of Texas

Drilling for natural gas in itself doesn't pose a threat to air and water quality, if it's done properly.

There are thick shale sequences, for example in upstate New York, that have been bubbling gas for millions of years, and it does get into water. It's there naturally. Methane moving around in the natural environment is not an unusual occurrence.

- Source: Video, "Hear Our Voices: Dr. Charles Groat on Biogenic Methane," June 2010

Don Siegel, Professor of Earth Sciences, Syracuse University

The long-term history of gas production and the science behind it show that recent public fears of hydro-fracking are misplaced.

- Source: Press Connects, "Unfounded fears obscure facts," April 7, 2010

Drinking water supplies are "essentially disconnected" from the Marcellus Shale, and the "microscopic little cracks" created by hydraulic fracturing in shale beds a mile deep pose little danger to the residents and landowners above.

- Source: Binghamton Press & Sun Bulletin, "Expert: Anti-drilling claims full of hyperbole," June 25, 2010

But according to Syracuse University Earth Sciences professor Don Siegel, these concerns are more myth than reality. This is the first environmental issue that I've thrown my hat into the ring on, she said. As a hydrogeologist, I really am almost offended by some of the opposition that's trying to paint a picture of what groundwater resources are like that is completely wrong.

- Source: Binghamton Press & Sun Bulletin, "Expert: Anti-drilling claims full of hyperbole," June 25, 2010