

# Fracking rules solidified

**Greg Fladager, Casper (Wyo.) Journal, 6-18-10**

Wyoming's regulations for "fracking," a mineral industry term for fracturing rock layers to release more oil and gas, just became a whole lot tougher, possibly the toughest in the nation.

The state Oil and Gas Conservation Commission adopted the stringent requirements last week, despite strong industry objections. In an effort to address concerns over potential water contamination, the new guidelines will require disclosure of all the components used in "fracking" formulas.

"Where we ended up is, they will, according to these rules, provide us with all of the ingredients, but they have the right to designate a portion of the formula as proprietary, trade secrets or confidential, in which case that information will not be available to the public, but will be available only for the Oil and Gas Commission staff," said Gov. Dave Freudenthal, chairman of the Commission.

Until now, the formulas were exempt from disclosure under a special provision sometimes referred to as the "Halliburton rule" (it was believed that company managed to get the industry-wide exclusion from the federal Clean Water Act). The problem this caused for government regulators was they did not know all the elements to test for when a water well or aquifer was suspected of being contaminated by the fracking process.

"Fracking is essential, we really do not want to see an end to fracking," Freudenthal explained. "But that is not the same as saying it should not be looked at. Remember, if everything they say is true...when Halliburton says, 'just trust us, everything's fine,' OK, back to Ronald Reagan when he says, 'I trust, but let's verify.'"

Recent advances in fracking methods have led to a dramatic rise in its use in Wyoming and elsewhere. Meanwhile, stricter regulations are also being proposed at the national level, spurred on by concerns that increased use of the process in the northeastern U.S. might lead to contamination of the aquifers used by New York City and other highly populated areas.