

# EPA Subpoenas Halliburton Over "Fracking"

Emily Rand, CBS News, 11-10-10

The battle over the controversial natural gas process known as "fracking" got a little hotter today after the Environmental Protection Agency announced it has subpoenaed energy giant Halliburton after the company refused to submit information for a congressionally mandated study.

A method of extracting natural gas from deep underground, hydraulic fracturing or "fracking" has been the subject of intense debate in several states, including Pennsylvania, New York and Wyoming. It's supported by businesses and landowners who tout its benefit to a struggling economy, and opposed by those who charge the process -- where millions of gallons of water, sand, and potentially toxic chemicals are injected into the earth -- contaminates wells and threatens public health.

The EPA is currently collecting information for a lengthy study designed to examine the impact of the fracking process on water quality. In September the agency sent voluntary information requests to nine companies that provide fracking services.

The information the EPA requested included the chemical composition of fluids used in the fracking process, data on the impact of the chemicals on human health and the environment, and locations of sites where fracking has been conducted.

According to the EPA, eight of the companies----BJ Services, Complete Production Services, Key Energy Services, Patterson-UTI, RPC Inc., Schlumberger, Superior Well Services, and Weatherford---complied with the information request or made "unconditional commitments to provide all the information on an expeditious schedule". Only Halliburton failed to provide the EPA with the information it requested.

"As part of the agency's effort to move forward as quickly as possible, today EPA issued a subpoena to the company requiring submission of the requested information that has yet to be provided," the agency said in statement.

"We are disappointed by the EPA's decision today," Halliburton spokesperson Teresa Wong said in a statement. "Halliburton has been working in good faith in an effort to respond to EPA's September 2010 request for information on our hydraulic fracturing operations over a five-year period. "

Wong said the EPA request would have potentially required Halliburton to prepare approximately 50,000 spreadsheets, and that Halliburton representatives have met with EPA personnel to help try to narrow the focus of their "unreasonable demands".

As CBS News reported in September, fracking has long fueled environmental concerns. A series of public hearings held by the EPA on the issue July through September in Pennsylvania, New York, Texas and Colorado drew huge crowds of protesters for and against the drilling practice.