

Davis bill would require 'tracer' fluid in fracking

Jack Z. Smith, Fort Worth (Texas) Star-Telegram, 2-19-11

State Sen. Wendy Davis, D-Fort Worth, filed a bill Friday that she said would require companies drilling for natural gas to include a unique "tracer" fluid in water used in hydraulic fracturing of wells.

The tracer "would protect the gas drilling industry from false claims of groundwater contamination in the same manner that DNA evidence is used to prove (guilty) or exonerate defendants in criminal court cases," a news release issued by Davis said.

"The goal of this legislation is to reduce the cost of legal burdens on the gas drilling industry or landowners when questions of water contamination arise, while also demonstrating to a ground-water dependent public that drilling is safe," Davis said in a statement.

The use of the tracer fluid could help quickly settle costly legal disputes related to the fracturing process, she said.

Davis said she supports "responsible drilling" and "the positive impacts that drilling for natural gas have brought to the local economy."

Hydraulic fracturing is a process under which huge volumes of water and sand, along with a much-smaller volume of chemicals, are pumped into a wellbore under high pressure to create fractures in dense rocks and allow oil and natural gas to be produced.