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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**New PSR Report Reveals Oil & Gas Companies Fracked New Mexico Wells with PFAS**

Washington D.C. — Previously unpublicized information unearthed by Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR) shows that since at least 2013, oil and gas companies have used extremely toxic and persistent chemicals known as PFAS in New Mexico’s oil and gas wells.

PSR’s report, [Fracking with “Forever Chemicals” in New Mexico](#), details the use of thousands of pounds of PFAS in the state’s oil and gas wells. It also shows that gaps built into New Mexico’s industry-friendly disclosure rules prevent the public from knowing how widely PFAS – or other toxic chemicals – have been used in fracking as well as other stages and methods of oil and gas extraction.

PFAS are a highly dangerous class of human-made chemicals known for their extreme toxicity, severe health effects including cancer, and resistance to breaking down in the environment, leading to their nickname, “forever chemicals.” The industry’s use of these chemicals may be particularly risky in a state where 80 percent of the population depends on groundwater for drinking water, as oil and gas production and waste disposal can contaminate groundwater with PFAS and other toxic chemicals. Once contaminated, groundwater is particularly difficult to clean up.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA ) has indicated that for some types of PFAS, no amount in drinking water is safe.

PSR’s report documents that

- Between 2013 and 2022, oil and gas companies injected at least 261 New Mexico wells with 9,000 pounds of PFAS for use in fracking. Over the same period, oil and gas firms injected more than 8,200 wells with 243 million pounds of “trade secret” fracking chemicals that could be PFAS or other dangerous substances.
- New Mexico law allows oil and gas companies to use trade secret designations to withhold fracking chemical identities from the public and regulators.
- Under state law, oil and gas companies are not required to disclose any of the chemicals they inject into oil and gas wells during the drilling that precedes fracking or during other “downhole” operations aside from fracking.

These findings raise concerns that residents may unknowingly be exposed through well water or other pathways to PFAS and other hazardous substances used in hundreds or even thousands of oil and gas wells.

“The staggering number of chemical trade secret claims raises the potential that PFAS use is even more widespread than reported,” stated Dusty Horwitt, J.D., the report’s lead author. “New Mexico officials should act immediately to protect the public by prohibiting the use of PFAS in oil and gas extraction and requiring full disclosure of all chemicals used in oil and gas wells.”

PSR recommends that the State of New Mexico protect the health and environment of New Mexicans by halting PFAS use in oil and gas extraction and immediately expand public disclosure, as Colorado did in legislation passed in 2022. The report further recommends that New Mexico close a loophole that prevents oil and gas waste from being treated as hazardous. The industry’s waste may contain PFAS, which Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham petitioned U.S. EPA to designate as “hazardous.”

“These ‘forever’ chemicals are far too dangerous to be set loose in the environment like this,” observed report coauthor Barbara Gottlieb. “Once this toxic genie is out of the bottle, there is no putting it back.”

Advocates delivered PSR’s report and a letter to Gov. Lujan Grisham this morning asking for protection from PFAS in the oil and gas industry by revoking industry’s exemption from hazardous waste law and updating chemical disclosure rules.

“Horrible is the only way to describe the implications of PSR’s report on PFAS use and its risks to groundwater and frontline Greater Chaco Diné communities,” stressed Mario Atencio of Diné Citizens Against Ruining our Environment (C.A.R.E.). “The level of toxicity that PFAS chemicals have could mean that despite long-standing local Greater Chaco Navajo chapter opposition, the federal, state, local, and central Navajo Nation governments are partnering to facilitate the systemic contamination of the Greater Chaco Landscape. The absence of any meaningful Environmental Justice analysis and outreach by the BLM and BIA, should set in motion inquiries by oversight committees and regulators from all levels of governance.”

“Living in the New Mexico Permian, which is the second most productive oil region in the country, is to live a life where you are constantly bombarded with bone-chilling information about what is being done to your home by industry,” Kayley Shoup of Citizens Caring For the Future said. “To hear of yet another way that our public health and valuable resources, like water, are being put at risk is sickening and maddening. This reality is made even more scary in a place like Carlsbad where so much of our geology consists of fragile Karst terrain. The trauma that our environment and communities are taking on must not be underestimated.”

“In the Permian basin we are surrounded by oil and gas presence. Just out of my window I see fracking sites and four natural gas pipelines in my backyard,” said Jozee Zuniga, a leader with YUCCA, Youth United for Climate Crisis Action. “We know that this industry is harming our bodies and the environment. We need our government - from the feds, to the Governor and legislature, down to our local governments - to take action to protect us. Oil and gas should not be exempt from regulations designed to protect public health and the environment.”

“It’s highly alarming that the oil and gas industry is injecting thousands of pounds of ‘forever chemicals’ into the ground in New Mexico with almost no oversight,” said Soni Grant, a campaigner with the Center for Biological Diversity’s Climate Law Institute. “The state must do more to protect all New Mexicans and our land, air and water from highly toxic chemicals used in oil and gas extraction. New Mexico must demand transparency and accountability from the industry, and put public health over polluter profits.”

“Gov. Lujan Grisham has led the charge to designate PFAS as hazardous under federal waste law, which New Mexico replicates,” added Melissa Troutman of WildEarth Guardians. “Unfortunately, one industry that uses PFAS is exempt from

those hazardous waste rules. We hope the governor will equitably apply hazardous waste law to all sectors that use PFAS and remove the state exemption for oil and gas waste.”

“These ‘forever chemicals’ threaten the health of people and communities, wildlife, and ecosystems, and their effects transcend generations” said Ally Beasley of Western Environmental Law Center. “New Mexico officials should listen to those in frontline communities and heed the recommendations in this Report by prohibiting PFAS use in oil and gas extraction, requiring full disclosure of chemicals used in oil and gas wells, and closing the hazardous waste loophole for oil and gas. These actions are imperative to protect public health and advance environmental justice, now and for future generations.”

PSR’s analysis is based largely on a review of industry self-reported data recorded in New Mexico state records and in the non-governmental FracFocus database which, since 2017, has served as the official repository for New Mexico’s required disclosure of chemicals used in fracking.

Find the full report [here](#).

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*PSR mobilizes physicians and health professionals to advocate for climate solutions, clean energy and a nuclear-weapons-free world. PSR’s health advocates contribute the health voice to energy, environmental health, and nuclear weapons policy at the local, federal and international levels. Learn more at [www.psr.org](http://www.psr.org).*