

## Maryland imposes 2-year moratorium on hydraulic fracturing

May 30, 2015

With the passage of a new bill, the state of Maryland will not allow hydraulic fracturing until October 1, 2017. The bill passed the House of Delegates with a veto-proof 76 percent majority and the Senate with a 96 percent majority, bypassing the need for Governor Larry Hogan to sign it into law. Hogan, the first-term Republican Governor of the heavily Democratic state, voiced support for hydraulic fracturing during last year's campaign.

Martin O'Malley, Hogan's Democratic predecessor, had also voiced cautious support for hydraulic fracturing as long as the state imposed strict regulations. In January 2015, Maryland's Department of the Environment released a proposal detailing regulations for any oil and gas extraction that occurs within the state.

The Marcellus shale, which has been tapped extensively for natural gas in neighboring Pennsylvania, extends into Maryland's two westernmost counties. Proponents of hydraulic fracturing cite its potential for spurring economic growth in these largely rural areas, but opponents argue that it will damage western Maryland's tourism industry.

Sources: E&E News, Maryland Department of the Environment, *The Washington Post*

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