

**A RESOLUTION**

**Proposed  
Resolution  
20-651**

*To declare the sense of the Council that the United States Forest Service should prohibit horizontal hydraulic fracturing in the George Washington National Forest to protect regional water quality and supply.*

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this resolution may be cited as the “Sense of the Council in Support of a Prohibition on Fracking in the George Washington National Forest Resolution of 2014”.

**Sense of the  
Council in  
Support of a  
Prohibition on  
Fracking in  
the George  
Washington  
National  
Forest  
Resolution of  
2014**

Sec. 2. The Council finds that:

(1) The George Washington National Forest is located in the Potomac River watershed and plays a vital role in protecting downstream water quality.

(2) The Potomac River is the sole source of water for the residents, visitors, and workers in the District of Columbia.

(3) The United States Army Corps of Engineers Washington Aqueduct draws water from the Potomac River and is responsible for producing drinking water that meets water quality standards established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (“EPA”) under the federal Safe Drinking Water Act.

(4) DC Water purchases water from the Washington Aqueduct and is responsible for its delivery to the District, as well as complying with Safe Drinking Water Act standards and monitoring water quality.

(5) The Marcellus Shale geological formation, a potential source of natural gas that can be mined by horizontal hydraulic fracturing, lies underneath over half of the George Washington National Forest.

(6) Mining by horizontal hydraulic fracturing, also known as “fracking,” requires millions of gallons of water per well. This water is combined with sand and numerous chemical additives and injected into wells to break up the shale and access natural gas. Waste water from this process is often disposed of through underground injection. This process has been linked to significant adverse environmental impacts, including surface and drinking water contamination.

(7) The EPA is currently conducting a study of the impacts of hydraulic fracturing on drinking water resources, which will provide information and answer questions for local, state and federal decision makers. The draft report is expected to be released for public comment and peer review this year.

(8) The U.S. Forest Service is currently in the process of updating its George Washington National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, which will direct natural resource management for the Forest for the next 10 to 15 years, including the possibility of mining the Marcellus Shale by horizontal hydraulic fracturing.

(9) In October of 2011, Thomas P. Jacobus, General Manager of the Washington Aqueduct, wrote a letter to Kenneth Landgraf, Acting Forest Supervisor of the George Washington National Forest, strongly supporting a prohibition on horizontal hydraulic fracturing for natural gas development in the George Washington National Forest. In the letter, Mr. Jacobus stated that hydraulic fracturing in the George Washington National Forest gave “great cause for concern about the potential for degradation of the quality of our raw water supply as well as impact to the quantity of the supply.”

(10) In September of 2013, George Hawkins, General Manager of DC Water, wrote a letter to Thomas Vilsack, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, expressing concerns about allowing horizontal drilling in the George Washington National Forest. In the letter, Mr. Hawkins stated: “Uncertainties exist about the impacts of hydraulic fracturing on the District’s source water and treatment process. Changes in source water quality can directly affect our customers, including increased costs for drinking water treatment, monitoring and compliance. . . . It is my hope that the U.S. Forest Service will prohibit horizontal drilling in the George Washington National Forest until it can be proven that the practice will not negatively impact water quality.”

(11) Numerous other counties, cities, and local and federal officials have written to or filed comments with the U.S. Forest Service supporting the prohibition of or expressing concerns about horizontal fracturing in the George Washington National Forest, including the U.S. EPA, the National Park Service, Fairfax County Water Authority, U.S. Senators Tim Kaine and Mark Warner, and Mayor Vincent Gray.

Sec. 3. It is the sense of the Council that the United States Forest Service should prohibit horizontal hydraulic fracturing in the George Washington National Forest in its upcoming Revised Land and Resource Management Plan to protect water quality and supply in the Potomac River watershed.

Sec. 4. The Secretary to the Council of the District of Columbia shall transmit copies of this resolution upon its adoption to the Secretary of the United States Department of Agriculture, the Chief of the United States Forest Service, and the Director of the District Department of the Environment.

Sec. 5. This resolution shall take effect immediately upon the first date of publication in the District of Columbia Register.