**Unconventional Oil and Natural Gas Development**

Unconventional oil and natural gas play a key role in our nation's clean energy future. The U.S. has vast reserves of such resources that are commercially viable as a result of advances in horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracturing technologies.  These technologies enable greater access to oil and natural gas in shale formations. Responsible development of America's shale gas resources offers important economic, energy security, and environmental benefits.

We work with states and other key stakeholders to help ensure that the economic prosperity from unconventional oil and natural gas extraction does not come at the expense of public health and the environment. We have played a lead role in convening stakeholders and conducting outreach to individual citizens, communities, tribes, state and federal partners, industry, trade associations and environmental organizations that have a strong interest in the agency's work and policies related to unconventional oil and natural gas extraction.

Our focus and obligations under the law are to provide oversight, guidance and, where appropriate, rulemaking and enforcement, that achieve the best possible protections for human health and the air, water and land where Americans live, work and play.

## Improving our Scientific Understanding of Hydraulic Fracturing

* April 2012 Memorandum of Agreement among the U.S. Departments of Energy and Interior and the U.S. EPA about Collaboration on Unconventional Oil and Gas Research (PDF)
* **Our study of hydraulic fracturing and its potential impact on drinking water resources:** We studied the relationship between hydraulic fracturing for oil and natural gas and drinking water resources. The study includes a review of published literature, analysis of existing data, scenario evaluation and modeling, laboratory studies, and case studies. We released a progress report in December 2012; a final draft assessment report for peer review and comment in June 2015; and the final report in December 2016.  Our report concludes that hydraulic fracturing activities can impact drinking water resources under some circumstances and identifies factors that influence these impacts.  Learn more:
  + Final assessment
  + Study home page: epa.gov/hfstudy
  + Process of unconventional natural gas production (hydraulic fracturing and shale gas extraction)