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SYNOPSIS
Prohibits drilling technique of hydraulic fracturing.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT
As introduced.

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 6/30/2011)
AN ACT concerning certain drilling techniques and supplementing P.L.1985, c.432 (C.13:1M-1 et seq.).

BE IT ENACTED by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

1. The Legislature finds and declares that the practice of the drilling technique of hydraulic fracturing for natural gas exploration and production has been found to use a variety of contaminating chemicals and materials that can suddenly and in an uncontrolled manner be introduced into the surface waters and ground water of the State; that the companies engaging in the use of this drilling technique have been less than forthcoming in revealing the “cocktail” of chemicals and their volume that can be introduced into these waters; that in June 2010, there occurred an incident of an uncontrolled release of many gallons of contaminated water and natural gas from a hydraulic fracturing drill site in Clearfield County, Pennsylvania, and other such accidents are likely to occur; and that other states, including New Jersey’s neighbor, New York, are considering banning the drilling technique.

The Legislature therefore determines it is prudent and in the best interest of the people of the State of New Jersey to prohibit hydraulic fracturing in the State for the purpose of natural gas exploration or production.

2. a. No person may use the drilling technique known as hydraulic fracturing in the State for the purpose of natural gas exploration or production.

b. As used in this act, “hydraulic fracturing” means the drilling technique of expanding existing fractures or creating new fractures in rock by injecting water, often with chemicals, sand, or other substances, and often under pressure, into or underneath the surface of the rock for purposes including, but not necessarily limited to, well drilling and natural gas exploration and production. The term “hydraulic fracturing” shall include “fracking,” “hydrofracking,” “hydrofracturing,” and other colloquial terms for this drilling technique.

3. This act shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

This bill prohibits hydraulic fracturing (“hydrofracking”) in the State for the purpose of natural gas exploration or production. The bill defines “hydraulic fracturing” as the drilling technique of expanding existing fractures or creating new fractures in rock by injecting water and chemicals, sand, or other substances under
pressure into or underneath the surface of the rock for the purpose of well drilling or natural gas exploration. It includes “fracking,” “hydrofracking,” “hydrofracturing,” and other colloquial terms for this drilling technique.

Recently, drilling connected with natural gas exploration along the Marcellus Shale formation in Pennsylvania caused concern and a moratorium on such drilling in Pennsylvania and New York. The Marcellus Shale formation reaches beneath the southern tier of New York State, into Pennsylvania, Ohio, and West Virginia, and touches the edge of northwestern New Jersey. It is one of the largest untapped fossil fuel reserves in the Western Hemisphere and there have been estimates for the area to yield as much as 20 times the current nationwide output of natural gas, but the gas is not easy to extract. On June 5, 2010, hydraulic fracturing in Clearfield County, Pennsylvania caused an explosion and the release of many gallons of contaminated water and uncontrolled natural gas from the drill site.