

## EPA to Set Standards for Disposal of Fracking Wastewater

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On October 20, 2011, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced that it will develop national standards for the disposal of wastewater generated by fracking and shale gas production. The EPA indicated the new standards are necessary due to the tremendous increase in shale gas production in recent years. The disposal of wastewater generated by shale gas production activities is currently regulated by the states. In some states, wastewater is injected into deep underground shafts, while in others wastewater has been sent to sewage-treatment plants, which often are unequipped to handle the chemicals present in the fluids. Energy companies reuse some wastewater in the fracking process, but much of it still requires disposal.

The new wastewater disposal standards will be part of EPA's effluent guidelines program, which sets national standards for industrial wastewater. The EPA will analyze data and consult with the energy industry before issuing the proposed rule in 2014.

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