

California Releases Discussion Draft of Hydraulic Fracturing Regulations

FEBRUARY 5, 2013

California has become the latest state to propose regulations to address public concerns over hydraulic fracturing activities. The California Department of Conservation's Division of Oil, Gas and Geothermal Resources ("DOGGR") released a [discussion draft](#) of hydraulic fracturing regulations on December 18, 2012. The DOGGR [website](#) indicates that hydraulic fracturing has been used to stimulate oil and gas production in California for more than 30 years "with no reported damage to the environment." Most of California's oil and gas wells are vertical wells, not the horizontal wells used to extract gas from unconventional shale gas deposits in other areas of the country. As such, hydraulic fracturing in California is principally performed to achieve maximum production from conventional wells. Reportedly, much less water is used in the hydraulic fracturing process in California than in other states, such as those in the Marcellus Shale area.

California's existing regulations set forth well construction standards, but they do not require reporting of much information about associated hydraulic fracturing activities. The recently released discussion draft would amend existing oil and gas regulations to require operators to provide specific information to the DOGGR and the public regarding hydraulic fracturing activities, spills, and hydraulic fracturing fluids. In addition, the regulations would require that protected water zones be isolated and sealed off to prevent contamination. Operators would be required to conduct pressure testing and other analyses prior to hydraulic fracturing, to ensure the activities will not result in the migration of fracking fluids or oil and gas into protected water. Operators would also be required to continuously monitor various parameters during operations and immediately notify the DOGGR of any problems.

Comments on the discussion draft are currently being accepted [here](#). DOGGR expects to begin the formal rulemaking process later this month by issuing a proposal with a 45-day public comment period and at least one public hearing.

1 Min Read

Related Topics

Energy

Water

Related Capabilities

Environmental

This entry has been created for information and planning purposes. It is not intended to be, nor should it be substituted for, legal advice, which turns on specific facts.