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Science or Soundbite? Shale Gas, Hydraulic Fracturing, and Induced Earthquakes

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Details

Title: Science or Soundbite? Shale Gas, Hydraulic Fracturing, and Induced Earthquakes

Description:

Hydraulic fracturing is the process of injecting wells with water, sand, and chemicals at very high pressure. This process creates fractures in deeply buried rocks to allow for the extraction of oil and natural gas as well as geothermal energy. USGS scientists discuss the opportunities and impact associated with hydraulic fracturing. Doug Duncan, associate coordinator for the USGS Energy Resources Program, addresses the increasing role that unconventional oil and gas resources play in the nation's petroleum endowment. USGS hydrologist Dennis Risser discusses some of the major water availability and quality challenges associated with natural gas development, with a focus on the Marcellus Shale in Pennsylvania. Bill Leith, associate coordinator the USGS Hazards Program, concludes by discussing the potential connection between disposal of waste fluids from hydraulic fracturing and earthquakes.

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Source:

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File Details:

Dave Russ: First of all, I certainly like to thank you all for coming here tonight and welcome to the National Center, of the U.S. Geological Survey. I'm Dave Russ, I'm the regional executive of the Northeast here at the USGS and we're excited, very excited to have you here at our evening lectures where we showcase some of the studies and research that our USGS scientists are conducting.

The Science in Action lecture series that this is a part of, is intended to give you a better understanding of the science behind the issues that affect our daily lives. Tonight's lecture will be a panel discussion on hydraulic fracturing. A question and answer session will follow, and we'll hold questions, if it's all right, until the final panelist has made his presentation.

I'm going to begin with just a very brief overview of what we're doing in the USGS regarding hydraulic fracturing to provide some context for you as a matter of introduction and before we begin, I would like to ask you to silence your cell phones if you have one so that it doesn't disrupt folks as we proceed here. Hydraulic fracturing has been a major topic in newspapers and magazines for well over a year or so now. In fact, just today two articles in the Wall Street Journal describing issues and activities associated with it, so certainly something that's in the public's eye.

However, hydraulic fracturing is not new. It's a technique that's been used for decades by the energy industry to assist in extracting oil and natural gas from

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