

JOIN THE EFFORT TO BAN FRACKING WASTE FROM CT TOWN-BY-TOWN

We are working with volunteers in the six CT watershed towns to ban fracking waste through local ordinance. Our goal is to join the 34 other towns and cities in CT that have banned this toxic, radioactive waste.

Our mission at the NRWA is to protect water quality in the NR watershed. Allowing fracking waste from PA to enter our watershed threatens water quality in our Rivers and Long Island Sound.

How might fracking waste come to the CT watershed Towns? The state is set to begin importing this waste after July 1. It is often used as a road de-icer, as an additive to construction fill and to concrete often used to cap brownfields. It poses a threat of spillage while being transported and transferred to storage and treatment facilities. Over 6,600 such spills have occurred in other states. Owners of industrial sites could apply for permits to build new storage facilities. (The watershed town of Lewisboro, NY is in Westchester County which unanimously voted to ban fracking waste.)

The chemicals—what are we talking about here. Of the hundreds of chemicals found in fracking waste, 56% have been examined and 44% we have little to no information about. Of the 56% more than half are soluble in water and over a third are volatile, meaning they can be inhaled, swallowed or absorbed through skin. The chemicals that have been studied, we know to cause cancer and affect the brain and nervous systems, the immune system, respiratory, circulatory, reproductive and endocrine systems, liver and skin. A new Yale study supports these numbers. <https://news.yale.edu/2016/01/06/toxins-found-fracking-fluids-and-wastewater-study-shows>

Redding is especially vulnerable because of the Wire Mill which has been classified as a brownfield due to past contamination. It is common practice when capping brownfields to use concrete that has fracking waste as an additive. This adds more toxins to contaminated sites. The Norwalk River runs through the Wire Mill, so without this ban, we run the risk of adding new toxins which may leach into the river. The ban prevents this and also prevents any industrial properties, such as the wire mill, from applying for a permit to open a future transfer or storage site.

This is a taxpayer cost issue. Redding is already on the hook for paying for cleanup of the wire mill. This is a way to prevent future “21st Century Wire Mill” situations that could be similarly costly to taxpayers. Spills (of which over 6,600 have occurred nationwide) or leaching from contaminated fill (which has happened in Greenwich) can cost tens of millions to clean up. Radioactive waste that has spilled in other states takes 4000 years to break down and is simply too expensive to remediate. This is a way to protect against the problem by preventing it and/or providing a legal framework for requiring polluters to pay for cleanup—for example from a spill on interstate roadways. Entire counties in New York have passed this ban to prevent future remediation costs as has the state of Vermont and parts of Massachusetts and New Jersey.

This is a watershed issue and a LI Sound issue. Of the few hazardous waste treatment plants in CT that could receive the waste water, two (Meriden and Bristol) have bans in place. That

leaves Bridgeport as the primary remaining recipient. In Bridgeport waste would be treated and diluted and sent to Westport and Stamford wastewater treatment facilities where it would be treated in systems designed to treat sewage and then returned to LI Sound. As everyone knows, the Sound is a fragile and vitally important nursery for ocean life. It is crucial that we work to protect it in order to protect ocean life in the Atlantic at large. Radioactivity and chemical contamination have occurred in other states after treatment of fracking waste water. There has been bio-accumulation up the food chain resulting in fishing and other recreational activities posing health problems.

This is a drinking water issue for well owners. If chemicals from a spill seep down to the aquifer, which has happened several times in PA and other states, drinking water is contaminated. Period. Yale research has found traces of fracking chemicals in well water 5 years after contamination. The costs of repeated testing, legal action and remediation fall to homeowners. Restitution costs to municipalities and the state can be exorbitant.

Let's send a message to Hartford. The state has failed to pass a ban three times in the last five years. The assembly has passed a statewide ban, but the state senate has failed to bring it to a vote. Local ordinances are a way to show Hartford that CT doesn't want this waste by banning it from all six CT watershed towns.

Who wrote the ban and how good is it? The ban CT towns are using was written by attorneys at Riverkeeper in Washington DC and it closes many loopholes that the current, and expiring, moratorium on fracking waste in CT allows. The ban is comprehensive and designed to protect public health, water quality and towns financially from remediation costs. See the ordinance here as used in Redding: <http://norwalkriver.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/fracking-waste-ban-petition.pdf>

UPDATE ON WATERSHED TOWNS

REDDING: Vote taking place to ban fracking waste Monday, January 8th.

WESTON: Work is underway in Weston. Jen Siskind of Food and Water Watch will present the case for a local ordinance to the Board of Selectmen on January 18 at 7:30 at the Weston Town Hall. All are welcome.

RIDGEFIELD: Work is just beginning. To join the effort, contact us at info@norwalkriver.org.

WILTON: We need leaders in Wilton to step forward. Write to your First Selectman and ask for your town to adopt this ban.

NEW CANAAN: We need leaders in New Canaan to step forward. Write to your First Selectman and ask for your town to adopt this ban.

NORWALK: We need leaders in Norwalk to step forward. Write to your First Selectman and ask for your town to adopt this ban.