

Fracking is rare in Michigan, but still generates concern

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(Phys.org) —Fracking is limited in Michigan with an estimated 6 percent of the state's local jurisdictions reporting existing fracking operations or some kind of activity to expand them, but the topic generates significantly more debate, a University of Michigan survey finds.

When it comes to factors supporting fracking in Michigan communities, 43 percent of responding local officials said revenue for land-owners was a primary driver.

"By contrast, factors discouraging support for local fracking are reported to be more common, with 57 percent of officials polled citing environmental concerns such as potential risks to water resources or other environmental damage," said Tom Ivacko, administrator and program manager for the U-M Ford School's Center for Local, State, and Urban Policy (CLOSUP).

Fracking is the common term for [hydraulic fracturing](#), a process which releases natural gas by injecting a mixture of water, sand and chemicals at high pressure deep into the ground through encased wells to create and expand fractures in the rock.

The poll, part of the Michigan Public Policy Survey series at CLOSUP, reports:

- While the state controls fracking regulation, 63 percent of local leaders said local jurisdictions should have a great deal of authority to regulate the process, compared to 45 percent who felt the state should.
- Where fracking is an active topic, local officials believe that their citizens are more likely to oppose (37 percent) than support (11 percent) fracking in their communities. However, the survey respondents themselves—the chief elected and appointed officials—are more evenly split, with 36 percent opposing and 31 percent supporting such fracking.

Among a range of possible energy sources in Michigan, local leaders' support for fracking ranks near last, well below support for renewable sources such as solar and wind power.

The study, conducted from Oct. 7 to Dec. 17, 2013, involved surveys sent via hardcopy and the Internet to top elected and appointed officials in all municipalities in Michigan. A total of 1,353 jurisdictions returned valid surveys, resulting in a 73 percent response rate. The survey had a margin of error of 1.4 percentage points.

Provided by University of Michigan

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