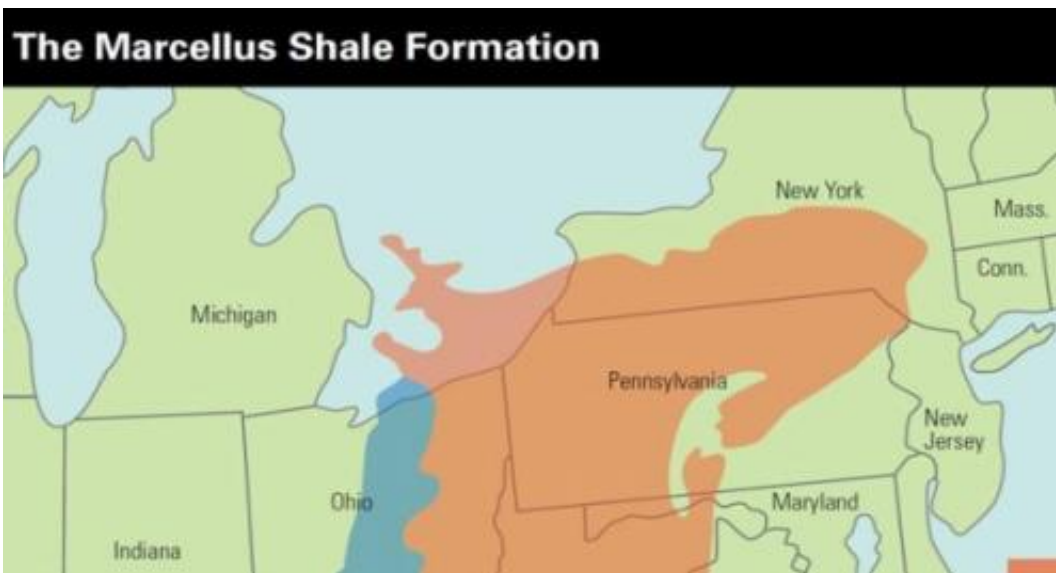


Study to inform Maryland decision on "fracking"

August 20 2014, by Audrey Hill



The Maryland Department of Environment and Department of Health and Mental Hygiene released on August 18, 2014, a report by the University of Maryland School of Public Health, which assesses the potential public health effects of allowing unconventional natural gas development and production (UNGDP), commonly known as "fracking" (a name derived from one part of the process), in western Maryland's Marcellus Shale region.

The School of Public Health's environmental and [occupational health](#)

and environmental justice experts produced the report, with input from residents of Garrett and Allegany counties and a variety of other stakeholders. The report is a part of Governor O'Malley's Marcellus Shale Safe Drilling Initiative, designed to "assist State policymakers and regulators in determining whether and how gas production from the Marcellus shale in Maryland can be accomplished without unacceptable risks of adverse impacts to [public health](#), safety, the environment and natural resources."

The UMD research team ranked various UNGDP-associated hazards based on the likelihood (high, moderately high, or low) that each could have a negative impact on public health. The 203-page report contains 52 specific recommendations for how to prevent or mitigate health impacts, if fracking is allowed in Maryland. It includes recommendations for health surveillance to verify the effectiveness of preventive measures, disclosure of all chemicals used in UNGDP, and legislation and regulations to empower surface owners and impacted communities to control their local environment.

More information: The full report "Potential Public Health Impacts of Natural Gas Development and Production in the Marcellus Shale in Western Maryland" is available online: www.marcellushealth.org/

Provided by University of Maryland

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