

# U-M releases final report on high-volume hydraulic fracturing in Michigan

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University of Michigan researchers today released the final version of a report analyzing policy options for the state of Michigan regarding high-volume hydraulic fracturing, the natural gas and oil extraction process commonly known as fracking.

The [final report](#) of the U-M Hydraulic Fracturing in Michigan Integrated Assessment consists of six chapters totaling nearly 200 pages. The two-part integrated assessment took three years to complete and is the most comprehensive Michigan-focused resource on high-volume hydraulic fracturing.

Gov. Rick Snyder praised the project in a March 2015 speech about energy policy, saying its findings had already helped shape changes to state rules regarding hydraulic fracturing.

"As a key decision maker on this topic, it's been important to have state engagement throughout our process, and it's great to know that the work has already been useful," said John Callewaert, integrated assessment director at U-M's Graham Sustainability Institute, which oversaw the project.

In response to more than 150 public comments and feedback from an expert review panel and an advisory committee, the [report](#) authors made hundreds of revisions in the final report to improve and clarify content, Callewaert said.

The changes include full incorporation of the new Michigan Department of Environmental Quality rules on high-volume hydraulic fracturing, adopted this year. In the draft version of the U-M report, released in February, the new DEQ regulations are described as proposed rule changes and were analyzed as policy options.

Changes implemented by the state now require more preparatory work and monitoring of water levels in high-volume hydraulic fracturing projects. In addition, DEQ must be notified at least 48 hours before such operations begin.

Also, the pressures and volumes being used must be reported, and well operators must post information about the chemical additives they use to the FracFocus Chemical Disclosure Registry, which is available to anyone online.

The U-M hydraulic fracturing report "helped us see an opportunity to strengthen our protection of water and give the public more information," Snyder said in March. "We are pleased at the level of thoughtful interest and exchange this issue is receiving outside of government."

Grenetta Thomassey, program director of the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council and a member of the hydraulic fracturing project's advisory committee, said the U-M team took great care with every phase of the project.

"We hope that decision makers find the final document useful and important enough to take additional actions to improve oversight of fracking activities in our state," Thomassey said.

High-volume hydraulic fracturing—the focus of recent attention and public concern—is defined by the state of Michigan as activity that is

intended to use more than 100,000 gallons of hydraulic fracturing fluid. Though high-volume hydraulic fracturing in Michigan is limited today, the U-M study takes into account the possibility that it could become more widespread due to a desire for job creation, economic growth, energy independence and lower-carbon fuels.

The first phase of the hydraulic fracturing project featured seven detailed, peer-reviewed hydraulic fracturing technical reports, released to the public in September 2013.

The key contribution of the final report is an analysis of Michigan-specific options in the areas of public participation, water resources and chemical use related to high-volume hydraulic fracturing. The report was written by U-M faculty researchers with support from students and Graham Sustainability Institute staff members.

"This report does not advocate for recommended courses of action. Rather, it presents information about the likely strengths, weaknesses and outcomes of various courses of action to support informed decision making," Callewaert said.

The U-M [hydraulic fracturing](#) integrated assessment cost roughly \$600,000 and was funded by U-M's Graham Sustainability Institute, Energy Institute, and Risk Science Center.

Provided by University of Michigan

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