



Press Statement
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HOUSE FRACKING BILL LEAVES GAPS IN LANDOWNER PROTECTIONS

Today, the North Carolina House of Representatives passed SB820, which legalizes fracking in the State of North Carolina and could allow drilling by 2014.

The bill includes many of the protections for North Carolina landowners that the Rural Advancement Foundation International – USA recommended in its report to the state Attorney General's office. However, it does not go far enough to protect key private property rights:

- The bill does not prohibit companies from drilling for gas without permission from the mineral rights owner, as long as a certain percentage of the owner's neighbors have signed gas leases – a practice called forced pooling.
- The bill makes surface use agreements optional, meaning that landowners who don't own mineral rights may have no say in how their land is used.
- The bill does not allow time for adequate study of potential impacts, such as whether current state eminent domain laws would allow companies to seize private property to build pipelines to transport the gas they extract.

SB820 will allow private companies to undermine some of the fundamental property rights of North Carolina's landowners. We hope that the Governor will veto this bill and that our legislators will uphold the veto. These concerns should be addressed before fracking is legalized.

We hope that the state will remain committed to a strong and thorough rule-making process that will address some of these concerns at the regulatory level.

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We will continue to work with landowners in affected areas to educate them about the potential impacts of gas leases, and we look forward to continuing to work with our elected officials to better protect the rights of landowners and property owners in our state.

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