Carbondale says “no” to fracking

City joins three others in support for moratorium

On November 14, Carbondale took a stand against the destructive, dangerous gas drilling process known as hydraulic fracturing, or fracking.

In a unanimous decision, the Carbondale City Council passed a resolution calling on the Illinois General Assembly to “enact a moratorium on high volume horizontal hydraulic fracturing until such time as the health and environmental concerns of the people of Illinois are addressed.”

Carbondale joins the Illinois towns of Carlyle, Anna and Alto Pass, as well as Union and Jackson counties, in taking action to support a moratorium. It is the largest city yet to do so.

The risks are too high
Horizontal high-volume fracking is a relatively new technique for the extraction of natural gas contained within shale rock. The technique, which has gained notoriety due to its health and environmental impacts in Ohio, Pennsylvania and elsewhere, involves pumping millions of gallons of water mixed with toxic chemicals into horizontal wells at high pressure to break up shale rock and release natural gas.

“arly in every state where fracking has occurred, impacts such as severe illness, polluted and depleted drinking water, hazardous waste leaks, earthquakes, explosions and/or air pollution have come with it,” noted Bruce Ratain, clean energy associate with Environment Illinois.

Carbondale has historically been associated with fossil fuel production, but the November 14 decision to call for a moratorium on fracking showed a keen understanding that the dangers posed by this gas drilling practice are too great to allow. The city has taken the initiative in opposing fracking, and the rest of Illinois must follow suit.

Stand with Carbondale
“Carbondale has taken a stand for public health and the environment; now it’s time for Illinois to stand with Carbondale and communities statewide by passing a moratorium on fracking,” said Ratain.

Take action
John Rumpler (right), a senior attorney with our national federation, talks with Janet McIntyre about fracking near her home in Butler County, Pa.

Visit us online to learn more and take action: www.EnvironmentIllinois.org.
I believe 2013 could be a turning point for our environment. The recent rise in extreme weather—including the tragedy of Hurricane Sandy and the record-breaking drought that scorched the country last year—has made global warming impossible to ignore, and hardened my resolve to shift Illinois away from dirty energy and cut our carbon pollution. I know you feel the same way.

Of course, there will be challenges: Anti-environment politicians will continue to cater to the interests of big polluters. But the climate change deniers and the dirty energy lobby are losing their grip on public discourse; they’re on the wrong side of science, and the wrong side of history.

Environment Illinois will keep fighting the good fight. And with you by our side, we can make 2013 a year to remember.

Sincerely,

Max Muller
Program Director

Report details steep costs of fracking

Hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, has spread rapidly throughout Pennsylvania, New York, Ohio and other states in recent years, leaving a trail of contaminated water, polluted air, and marred landscapes in its wake. As the oil and gas companies snatch up land in southern Illinois and our staff and allies fight for a moratorium on this dirty drilling, Environment Illinois has released a report highlighting the steep monetary costs of fracking.

Whereas the battle over fracking is often framed as a clash between its adverse health and environmental effects and its economic benefits, Environment Illinois’s recent report, “The Costs of Fracking,” finds that in addition to the dangers it poses to our safety, fracking also imposes heavy dollars and cents costs on the public. These costs are incurred in cleaning up contaminated water, repairing ruined roads, addressing health issues, and more. You can read the full report online at www.EnvironmentIllinois.org/reports.

Seven Illinois reps were “Dirty Air Villains”

Seven U.S. representatives from Illinois—Reps. Peter Roskam, Joe Walsh, Adam Kinzinger, Randall Hultgren, Donald Manzullo, Robert Schilling and John Shimkus—were among a total of 193 House members and 39 Senators rated as “Dirty Air Villains” in a recent analysis by the NRDC Action Fund, which was published in September in conjunction with Environment Illinois. These representatives have consistently voted against clean air laws, and all of them have taken between $20,000 and $1.1 million in campaign contributions from big polluters.

Max Muller, program director for Environment Illinois, said, “Americans count on their elected officials to help protect them and their children from dangerous air pollution, but this analysis shows that far too many members of Congress are neglecting that responsibility in favor of doing the polluters’ bidding. These Dirty Air Villains should be held accountable for their votes against our health.”
Hurricane Sandy was a wakeup call on global warming for all of us across the country. Thousands of homes were damaged or lost; entire communities were submerged under water; lives were disrupted; the costs were estimated to be as high as $60 billion; and tragically, dozens of people lost their lives.

Most of us understand that more extreme weather is becoming more common, the planet is warming, and pollution is behind much of it. Illinois can do better. We can reduce the pollution that’s behind global warming and rely more on clean energy, energy efficiency, clean cars and public transit—and less on the oil that pollutes our air and drives climate change.

We can no longer allow Big Oil to hold Illinois’s clean energy future hostage. It’s time for our leaders to heed Hurricane Sandy’s wakeup call and embrace clean energy, clean air and a safer future.

That’s why Environment Illinois is working to set the state on a path to getting off oil for good. We’re working to get there by convincing our leaders to make new investments in fuel-efficient cars, new transportation technology and a first-class system of public transit. With your help, we can greatly reduce our oil consumption and lead the nation toward a cleaner, safer future.
For Lake Michigan, the time is now

Over the past decade, polluter-friendly Supreme Court decisions left more than half of the streams and wetlands that feed and filter Lake Michigan open to unlimited dumping and development. Then, in April 2011, at the urging of Environment Illinois and our allies across the country, the Environmental Protection Agency proposed guidelines to fix these loopholes in the Clean Water Act.

It’s been almost two years. So why hasn’t President Obama finalized these crucial guidelines? The main culprits are big polluters and their anti-environment allies in Congress. They’ve been doing everything in their power to block the president from restoring these vital protections to our waterways.

When it comes to protecting Lake Michigan, there should be no hesitation. The lake is too important to risk. That’s why we’re making an all-out push this winter to show President Obama the support he needs to protect the lake for good.