

Nev. commission adopts fracking rules

By Associated Press

ELKO – A state panel has approved regulations guiding oil and gas exploration companies' use of hydraulic fracturing, better known as fracking, in Nevada.

The Commission on Mineral Resources' unanimous decision Thursday in Elko drew criticism from opponents, who say fracking could lead to water contamination, excessive water consumption and earthquake activity.

But supporters say the concerns are exaggerated, and they add that oil and gas development resulting from fracking will provide a boost to Nevada's economy.

The 2013 Legislature passed legislation requiring adoption of fracking regulations by January 2015.

Kate Fay, a representative of Houston-based Noble Energy Inc., praised the regulations. Her company is searching for oil in northeastern Nevada.

"Noble Energy believes these regulations are tough but they're workable, that they will help ensure that all oil and gas operators in Nevada follow best practices to protect public health and the environment," she said, according to the *Elko Daily Free Press*. "We think it will ensure the state has a strong role in enforcing these rules."

But Bob Fulkerson of the Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada said the governor-appointed commission was stacked with members with ties to "extractive industries" including oil and mining. The process to review the regulations was rushed, he said, and did not allow adequate public input.

“We know we’re playing in a game that’s been rigged from the get-go,” he said, according to the *Reno Gazette-Journal*. “It does appear the foxes have been put in charge of guarding the hen house. Nevada is simply not ready for this.”

Dawn Harris of Frack Free Nevada said substantial evidence from scientists links fracking to problems in human health, while opponent Steve Fisher said “water in this state should trump oil.”

Some tribal members and farmers also voiced opposition to fracking, which involves extracting oil and gas from rock by injecting high-pressure mixtures of water, sand or gravel and chemicals.

Among other things, the new regulations require the monitoring of well casings for quality, the disclosure of all chemicals used, the notification of land owners and county commissioners and the collection of multiple water samples for testing.

Resident Bob St. Louis, a hydrologist, said the regulations were well-vetted and would not endanger the land.

“I believe these regulations haven’t been rushed,” he said. “I believe best practices have been adopted from numerous states with a long history of fracking – both good and bad experiences. I think these are practical and thorough.”

Pam Borda, executive director of the Northeastern Nevada Regional Development Authority, said oil and gas development was needed to help diversify the economy in rural Nevada.