



Say Anything

GasLand director Josh Fox has big night over on MSNBC – but how much of what he said actually squares with the facts?

Previously scheduled to debate Josh Fox on the Huffington Post website later this month, Energy In Depth (EID) was disappointed to learn this week Fox abruptly decided to pull-out – “due to his schedule,” the organizers told us, he “won’t be able to join us.” No such schedule issue last night, though, as Fox appeared on two MSNBC shows over the space of three hours to plug his film and unload his usual clip of ridiculous talking points targeting the safe and responsible use of hydraulic fracturing. Here below we take a look at some of his biggest whoppers of the night.

Josh “Sweaters Up” For Dylan Ratigan



“Josh Fox” ...

... “Versus Reality”

“What we’re seeing here with [shale] gas ... one of the largest domestic onshore natural gas drilling campaigns in history...” (3:35)

Host: “Is it a known fact that hydraulic fracture drilling is the cause of the [natural] gas being in the aquifer?”

Fox: “PA DEP says ‘yes.’ Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission says ‘yes.’ EPA is doing an investigation right now ... this process has never been investigated.” (6:18)

Actually, according to the Energy Information Administration (EIA), more natural gas wells were [drilled in 1982](#) than today -- and more than two times the number of [petroleum wells](#).

The reality is, 99 percent of the shale gas development currently taking place in America is confined to five states.

PA DEP actually says “no.”

DEP: “A lot of folks relate the situation in Dimock to a fracking problem. I just want to make sure everyone’s clear on this – **that it isn’t. ... It wasn’t a fracking problem.**” (DEP’s Scott Perry, [5/11/10](#))

More DEP: “There has never been any evidence of fracking ever causing direct contamination of fresh groundwater in Pennsylvania or anywhere else.” (Perry, [4/2/10](#))

Colorado says “no” too

COGCC issued an [official rebuttal to GasLand](#) earlier this week

“Because an informed public debate on hydraulic fracturing depends on accurate information, the Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission (COGCC) **would like to correct several errors** in [GasLand’s] portrayal of the Colorado incidents.”

“However, using the same investigative techniques, we concluded that Mike Markham’s and Renee McClure’s wells contained biogenic gas that was not related to oil and gas activity. **Unfortunately, Gasland does not mention our McClure finding** and dismisses our Markham finding out of hand.”

“Finally, [GasLand] asserts that the water in the Markham and McClure wells deteriorated after drilling and hydraulic fracturing occurred nearby. **However, COGCC records indicate little or no temporal relationship between the Markham and McClure complaints and nearby drilling and hydraulic fracturing activities**, which occurred several years earlier and in most cases many years earlier.”

Fox: “*This process has never been investigated.*”

That’s true -- unless you don’t count all the times it has.

- A 2002 study conducted by the [Interstate Oil and Gas Compact Commission](#) (IOGCC) -- a multi-state government agency that represents thirty-seven governors -- confirmed the GWPC’s conclusion that no evidence of

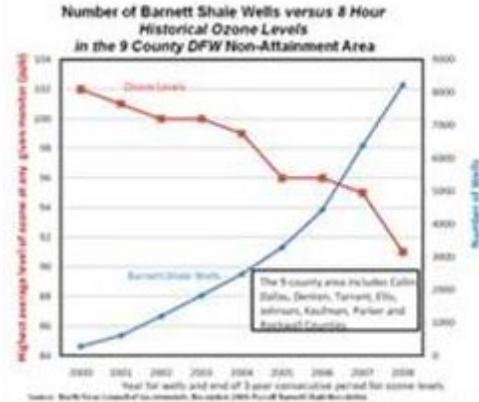
contaminated drinking water due to hydraulic fracturing could be found.

- [IOGCC member states](#) have all stated that there have been no cases where hydraulic fracturing has been verified to have contaminated drinking water.
- [EPA in 2004](#): “Although thousands of ... methane wells are fractured annually, EPA did not find confirmed evidence that drinking water wells have been contaminated by hydraulic fracturing fluid injection...”
- [EPA in 2009](#) (hearing before Senate EPW Committee): Sen. Inhofe: “Do any one of you know of one case of ground water contamination that has resulted from hydraulic fracturing?” **Peter Silva, EPA asst. administrator for water: “Not that I'm aware of, no.”** Cynthia Giles, EPA asst. administrator for compliance: “I understand there's some anecdotal evidence [sic.], but I don't know that it's been firmly established.” Inhofe: “So the answer is no, you don't know of it.” *Cynthia Giles nods.*
- [EPA in 2010](#): “‘I have no information that states aren't doing a good job already,’ Steve Heare, director of EPA's Drinking Water Protection Division said on the sidelines of a state regulators conference here. He also said despite claims by environmental organizations, **he hadn't seen any documented cases that the hydro-fracking process was contaminating water supplies.**” (Dow Jones Newswires, [2/26/10](#))

“You have more air pollution from natural gas drilling in Dallas-Fort Worth than all of the cars and trucks in Dallas-Fort Worth, and that's the fourth-largest city in America.” ([6:51](#))

The chart below tells you all you need to know about the validity of this talking point. But for a bit more detail on why it's wrong – and what specific methodological mistakes Dr. Armendariz made in arriving at this conclusion – click [here](#) for Dr. Ed Ireland's comprehensive rebuttal over on the BSEEC website.

One more thing: DFW is the fourth-largest metropolitan area in the United States, not city (that's Houston).



“I do think that we need to get off of fossil fuels entirely.” (3:21)

According to [EIA](#), fossil fuels currently meet 85 percent of U.S. energy demand and are expected to meet 79 percent of that demand in 2030. Here at EID, we believe in renewables and alternatives too. We just don't believe in magic.

ROUND TWO

No Sweater For (the now '[suspended indefinitely without pay](#)')Olbermann, But Plenty of Outrageous Statements



“Josh Fox” ...

... “Versus Reality”

“Hydraulic fracturing is a **new form of drilling** for natural gas that forces down millions of gallons of

New form? Dept. of Energy/GWPC: “Both horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracturing are **established**

water laced with toxic chemicals, and this brew has about 600 different chemicals. ([1:04](#))

technologies with significant track records; horizontal drilling dates back to the 1930s and **hydraulic fracturing has a history dating back to the 1950s.**" (DOE, GWPC [2009](#))

600 chemicals? Same report: "Although the hydraulic fracturing industry may have a number of compounds that can be used in a hydraulic fracturing fluid, **any single fracturing job would only use a few of the available additives.** For example, in [this exhibit], **there are 12 additives used,** covering the range of possible functions that could be built into a fracturing fluid."

"The problem is that these chemicals, fracking fluids, are turning up in people's water supply." ([1:22](#))

PA DEP chief: "It's our experience in Pennsylvania that **we have not had one case** in which the fluids used to break off the gas from 5,000 to 8,000 feet underground have returned to contaminate ground water." (Reuters, [10/1/10](#))

DEP Redux: "We haven't had frack fluid come back from thousands of feet down and get into people's drinking water supply." (KDKA-TV, [10/16/10](#))

"We're currently in the largest natural gas drilling campaign in history. ... It's proposed for places like the New York City watershed." ([1:39](#))

See above for the facts about shale gas being the largest 'drilling campaign in history'. As for the idea that Marcellus development is "proposed" for the NYC watershed, time to update the talking points:

NY Times: "New York State environmental officials [DEC] announced on Friday that they would impose far stricter regulations on ... natural gas drilling in the upstate area that supplies most of New York City's drinking water, making it highly unlikely that any drilling would be done there." (New York Times, [4/23/10](#))

"Even if you get five or 10 years of natural gas out of these unconventional gas plays ... you're going to be at a net loss of energy and in money at the end of the day..." ([2:17](#))

Five or 10 years? Try 100: "The natural gas shale boom in North America has more than doubled discovered gas resources and can supply more than a century of consumption at current rates, an IHS CERA study released Wednesday said." (Reuters, [3/10/10](#))

"There's a woman I interviewed last week who has frack fluids – these carcinogenic chemicals and neurotoxins – in her lungs, simply from just living around this area." ([4:02](#))

You read that right: Josh Fox actually told Keith Olbermann that a woman has fracturing fluids ... in her lungs. Any wonder why even a [long-time NYT editor](#) called Josh and his film "flawed"?