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# Denton To Vote On Fracking Ban

By [LAUREN SILVERMAN \(/PEOPLE/LAUREN-SILVERMAN\)](#) • JUL 14, 2014

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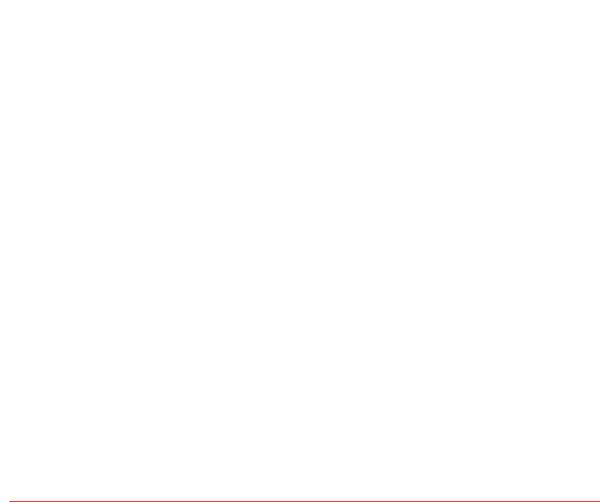
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*A Vantage Energy natural gas rig in southwest Arlington just south of Interstate 20, Monday, December 23, 2013*

PAUL MOSELEY / STAR-TELEGRAM



The city of Denton could take another step Tuesday toward becoming the only Texas city to permanently ban hydraulic fracturing, or fracking.



The city of Denton sits above the Barnett Shale, one of the country's largest natural gas fields. There are already nearly 300 active gas wells within city limits said to have produced a billion dollars in mineral wealth.



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2:08

*The KERA radio story.*

But citizens filed a petition in May with nearly 2,000 signatures forcing the city council to vote on whether to ban fracking.

Resident Cathy McMullen, who helped organize the initiative, says in the past month, Denton has been inundated with people employed by outside opposition.

"It's hard being the first," McMullen says, "And what's making it particularly hard for us is that the fracking is [already] there. We're trying to get it out."

If Denton doesn't approve the ban Tuesday night it will go to voters in the November ballot.

### **Environmental Concerns**

McMullen, a home health nurse who is part of the Denton Drilling Awareness Group (<http://frackfreedenton.com/>), says it is extremely unlikely the City Council will pass the ban on fracking. She expects the issue will go to the voters in November.

"If we get the ban," McMullen says, "That will mean that no other family in this city will have to live with a huge 15 foot flare outside their child's window for days."

She hopes a ban forces industry to adopt more environmentally friendly techniques, such as vapor recovery units, lined frack pits and electric motors. In addition, McMullen wants air monitoring and set hours for when activity can occur.

"Right now what we're seeing is they're more willing to spend money on propaganda than on new equipment," she says.

### **Business Responds**

Gas fields in Denton are said to have produced a billion dollars in mineral wealth and contributed millions more for the city (<http://bigstory.ap.org/article/texas-gas-town-considers-banning-fracking>). Which is why a fracking ban, according to pro industry groups, could cost the city millions.

Ed Ireland, President of the Barnett Shale Energy Education Council (<http://www.bseec.org/>), a pro-industry group, says drilling is one of the strongest economic engines in North Texas.

"So any banning of the activity would have significant economic implications."

According to an economic impact study conducted by The Perryman Group (<http://energyindepth.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Perryman-Denton-Fracking-Ban-Impact.pdf>) in Waco, banning hydraulic fracturing in Denton would cause potential losses of \$251.4 million in economic activity in the city over 10

years and more than 2,000 jobs.

The study was commissioned by the Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce, which represents several big industry players.

Both Ireland and McMullen expect legal challenges to a ban if it passes.

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