

## Fracking Releases Acceptable Levels of Methane

The study concluded that the majority of hydraulically fractured natural gas wells have surface equipment that reduces on-the-ground methane emissions by 99 percent, although it also found that elsewhere on fracking rigs, some valves do allow methane to escape at levels 30 percent higher than those set by EPA. Overall, however, the study concludes that total methane emissions from fracking are about 10 percent lower than levels set by EPA.

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The \$2.3 million study was conducted by scientists at the University of Texas, with funding provided by nine energy companies, including ExxonMobil, and one environmental group, the Environmental Defense Fund. A spokesman for the University of Texas said that while the companies contributed money to the study, they had no input on the research or results, which were subject to independent peer review before being published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, one of the nation's most prestigious scientific journals.

A 2011 study by Cornell University researchers ignited opposition to fracking when it concluded that methane leaks from natural gas wells actually made natural gas a more climate-unfriendly energy source than coal. Although Obama has championed natural gas as a low-carbon "bridge" fuel to the