

The Great Lakes

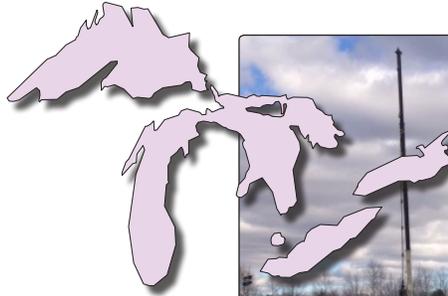
In the United States there are eight states - Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania and New York - that are either actively fracking, or considering it. The shale formations in the Great Lakes Basin are the Marcellus Shale, the Utica Shale, Collingwood Shale and the already-fracked Antrim Shale.

While there are no natural gas deposits in Wisconsin and Minnesota, both states are being mined for silica sand, which is formed by pieces of crystalline silica and is an ideal form of sand for fracking companies. However, mining for silica sand has raised concerns with residents because of the large amounts of water needed for the mining process and the health hazards caused by exposure to crystalline silica.

Despite strong opposition from groups and residents, Illinois recently gave the green light to restart fracking operations in June 2013 by passing new regulations. Fracking proponents have hailed Illinois' regulations as "the strictest in the country." Illinois will be the first U.S. state to require fracking companies to disclose chemicals used before and after the drilling process.

In Indiana, most of the fracking that has occurred has been in the southern part of the state with the exception of Steuben County in the northeastern corner of the state. Terre Haute recently banned fracking within city limits.

Michigan may soon become the state with the most fracking within the Great Lakes Basin. Encana has proposed withdrawing 15 billion litres of water from local watersheds in Kalkaska County in order to drill 500 new fracking wells in northern Michigan.



Fracking site in Kalkaska County, Michigan, the centre of fracking in the Great Lakes Basin. Photo courtesy of respectmyplanet.org

Ohio and Pennsylvania are Great Lakes states with a significant amount of fracking, but most of the fracking within these states occurs outside of the Great Lakes Basin.

New York State has had a de facto fracking moratorium for roughly five years. Governor Andrew Cuomo continues to delay making a decision on the matter, stating he is waiting for a decision from the state's Health Commissioner, Dr. Nirav Shah. The movement to ban fracking in the state has gained a lot of momentum with frequent rallies, strong coalitions like New Yorkers Against Fracking, and celebrity endorsements from Sean Lennon and Mark Ruffalo.

While companies are prohibited from withdrawing water from the Great Lakes for fracking, companies like Encana are drawing groundwater that feed rivers in the Great Lakes Basin.

In Canada, Enbridge Gas Distribution and Union Gas are petitioning the Ontario Energy Board for new and expanded natural gas infrastructure in the Greater Toronto Area.

If the application is approved, millions of people in Ontario will be relying on imported fracked gas from the U.S. Marcellus shale by 2015.

The approval could open the door to more fracking of the Marcellus shale posing serious risks to the Great Lakes Basin with massive water withdrawals, potential water contamination and pipeline leaks and hazardous waste risks.

A bill is before the Quebec legislature that – if passed – would result in a moratorium on fracking in the Lowlands of the St. Lawrence River for up to five years. While opposition parties are withholding their support, groups are still urging the Quebec government to pass a ban throughout the province. Even if the bill passed, it would not stop shale oil exploration in the less densely populated Anticosti Island at the mouth of the St. Lawrence River. Quebec is also at the centre of a \$250 million NAFTA lawsuit launched by Lone Pone Resources a company whose permits in the St. Lawrence Valley were revoked in 2011.

(For more information see the [Ontario](#) and [Quebec](#) sections.)

LIST OF INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES AND GROUPS IN THE GREAT LAKES BASIN

United Tribes of Michigan (no website)

Union of Ontario Indians
www.anishinabek.ca

Chiefs of Ontario
www.chiefs-of-ontario.org

Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians
www.aiai.on.ca/about/about-us.aspx

Southern First Nations Secretariat
www.sfns.on.ca

GROUPS WORKING ON FRACKING

Committee to Ban Fracking in Michigan
letsbanfracking.org

The Council of Canadians Ontario-Quebec-Nunavut Regional Office
www.canadians.org/fracking

Food & Water Watch
www.foodandwaterwatch.org

FLOW
flowforwater.org

Sierra Club Illinois
illinois.sierraclub.org

Southern Illinoisans Against Fracturing our Environment
www.dontfractureillinois.net

(Also see list of groups in [Ontario](#) and [Quebec](#).)

RESOURCES AND REGULATIONS

Municipal resolutions in the Great Lakes states and the rest of the U.S.
www.foodandwaterwatch.org/water/fracking/fracking-action-center/local-action-documents/

FLOW's ordinance program
flowforwater.org/programs/fracking/

Food & Water Watch activist tools
www.foodandwaterwatch.org/water/fracking/fracking-action-center/activist-tools/

Tribal and First Nations Great Lakes Water Accord
www.nofnec.ca/PDF/Presentations/Tribal-and-First-Nations-Great-Lakes-Water-Accord.pdf

Great Lakes St. Lawrence Cities Initiative's resolution on Shale Gas Exploration, Extraction and Treatment Activities and the Role of Local Government
www.glsccities.org/annual-meetings/2012/2012%20GLSLCI%20Approved%20Resolutions.pdf