Natural Gas Extraction from Shale - Too Good to Be True?

From print media, billboard displays, radio sound-bites, and television commercials, you have heard and seen that natural gas is safe, clean, affordable, abundant, domestic, and an economic-bolstering, job-creating answer to our short and long-term energy needs. Is this too good to be true?

To obtain these fossil fuel reserves trapped in deep shale formations, the process of "hydrofracking" and horizontal drilling have been combined and continue to evolve. Often, the technique is simply called fracking. Its use has spread to more than thirty states. Wells are first drilled a mile or more deep and then horizontally more than two miles across to access gas-laden rock. Then, using explosive charges and millions of gallons of water, sand, chemicals, and high pressure, the shale is "fracked" to release the natural gas that flows to the surface. Some of the fluids from the process, mixed with matter from the deep below the surface, also flow back to the well site.

Is this process clean and safe? What are the costs of fracking? How abundant and accessible are the natural gas reserves? To what extent and for how long does natural gas development provide employment opportunities and an economic boost? Will our natural gas remain an affordable, domestic energy supply for decades to come? To find out, do your homework. Review the following list of resources referred by League members from across the nation. Explore topics of interest from related public health concerns to economic impacts through a variety of media.

Natural gas operations are projected to impact everyone in our country. Become knowledgeable, think critically, and act based on your position. Remember action without study is fatal, and study without action is futile!