

Fracking Waste in New York: What is Fracking Waste?

The term fracking waste refers to waste produced by the extraction of oil and/or natural gas using hydraulic fracturing (fracking), either high-volume fracking or conventional, low-volume fracking. Waste from both is a concern in New York, despite its ban on high-volume fracking.

Types of Fracking Waste:

- Flowback fluid (or flowback water)
 - Wastewater that returns to the surface soon after a well is fracked, consisting mostly of water, injection fluids, and chemicals.
- Production brine (or produced water)
 - Wastewater that flows to the surface during oil and gas well production.
- Solid waste (for example, drill cuttings, drilling muds, and sand)
 - Soil, rock, and other solid materials that are removed when a well is drilled, and sand that returns to the surface after a well is fracked.



*Brine Storage Tank in Pennsylvania,
Photo by Nadia Steinzor*

Sources of Fracking Waste in New York:

- Fracking waste from Pennsylvania that is sent to New York for disposal.
 - More than 510,000 tons of solid waste and 23,000 barrels of liquid waste, and counting.
- Waste from conventional, low-volume oil and gas extraction in New York.
 - Though high-volume fracking is banned, New York must dispose of waste from more than 12,000 conventional, low volume wells.

Common Contaminants in Fracking Waste:

- Chemical additives, such as ethylene glycol, naphthalene, and sulfuric acid
 - Toxic to human health.
- Metals and organic compounds
 - For example, barium is linked to gastrointestinal disturbances, muscle weakness, and paralysis.
- BTEX – benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, xylene
 - For example, benzene is a carcinogen, and linked to blood disorders such as anemia.
 - For example, toluene is linked to nervous system, kidney, and liver problems.
- Salts or total dissolved solids
 - Corrodes infrastructure, harms aquatic life and vegetation.
- NORM – naturally occurring radioactive materials, such as radium-226 and radium-228
 - Carcinogen, linked to blood disorders.

Learn more at www.riverkeeper.org/fracking-waste-in-new-york