

## Large Percentage of Exxon, Chevron Shareholders Vote for Fracking Study

By David O. Williams | 05.25.11 | 5:19 pm

Exxon Mobil CEO Rex Tillerson today admitted the natural gas drilling process known as hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, comes with certain risks, telling reporters at the company's annual meeting that the debate still needs to stay "fact-based."

"We know there are risks," Tillerson said, according to Reuters. "We're not trying to characterize this as an activity that does not have risks."

Nearly 30 percent of the shareholders of the world's largest publically held oil and gas company voted in favor of a non-binding resolution filed by the shareholder advocacy group **As You Sow** seeking a company study of the environmental and financial risks of fracking.

Fracking involves the high pressure injection of water, sand and undisclosed chemicals deep into natural gas wells to fracture tight geological formations and free up more gas. Critics say the chemicals need to be publically disclosed because the process can lead to groundwater contamination.

Also today, more than 40 percent of Chevron's shareholders voted in favor of a similar **As You Sow** resolution.

"Today's votes clearly demonstrate that mainstream investors are concerned about fracking and want more disclosure on how these companies are dealing with the environmental, public health, and financial risks associated with this practice," Michael Passoff, senior strategist with **As You Sow**, said in a release.

"The fact that 41 percent of Chevron investors voted in favor of more disclosure, an exceptionally high level of support for a first-year resolution, shows how seriously the company's shareholders are taking this issue."

U.S. House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., recently told the Colorado Independent that oil and gas companies should voluntarily move toward full disclosure of proprietary fracking formulas for their own protection, in order to avoid future litigation.

U.S. Rep. Diana DeGette, D-Colo., sponsored the Fracturing Responsibility and Awareness of Chemicals (FRAC) Act to remove a Safe Drinking Water Act exemption granted the process during the Bush administration in 2005. DeGette says the disclosure of chemicals is an "interim remedy" with bipartisan support.