

## Exxon Fracking Report Responds to Shareholders

Jonathan Fahey, Associated Press | Sept. 30, 104

**NEW YORK** — Exxon Mobil issued a report Tuesday that acknowledges the environmental risks of hydraulic fracturing but also defends the practice as being better for the environment than other types of energy production and generation.

Under pressure from the corporate responsibility group **As You Sow**, as well as New York City Comptroller Scott Stringer and other shareholders, Exxon agreed earlier this year to reveal more about how it manages the risks involved with the drilling technique, known as fracking.

The report acknowledges that drilling wells and producing oil and gas from shale formations and other so-called unconventional sources do carry risks, including the possibility of water contamination and leaks of natural gas into the atmosphere that contribute to climate change.

“Hydraulic fracturing has been responsibly and safely used by the oil and gas industry for more than 60 years, but the process isn’t without risks,” said Jeffrey Woodbury, vice president of investor relations, in a statement.

But the report also reads like a defense of unconventional oil and gas production and fracking. It cites studies that have failed to show direct links between cracking rock to allow oil and gas to escape and water contamination, and it goes into detail about the benefits of unconventional oil and gas production and how it compares favorably to many other types of energy production and generation.

Danielle Fugere, president of **As You Sow**, said Tuesday’s report falls far short of the specific data she and others had been calling for.

“Exxon continues to discuss generalized practices...but provides no concrete data on whether it is actually reducing risks and impacts at each of the plays in which it is conducting fracking,” she said.

The report includes graphics and charts, many from earlier studies, that explain how wells are drilled and how they are constructed to prevent oil, gas or drilling fluids from leaking into to water tables. It also details Exxon’s efforts to use recycled wastewater instead of fresh water in the fracking process.

The report also cites studies from the National Energy Technology Laboratory that show water use from unconventional drilling in a favorable light. In one study, oil and gas development was shown to use less water than agriculture. In another, it was shown that shale gas drilling uses less water per unit of energy than nearly every other fossil fuel, nuclear energy and far less than corn ethanol or soy biodiesel.

Fugere says she wanted data specific to the regions where Exxon operates that showed such things as what sources of water Exxon was tapping to operate and how much recycled water Exxon is using in each location.