

Environmentalists upset with Calif. fracking bill

By Marc Lifsher, Los Angeles Times

SACRAMENTO – Environmental and liberal activist groups are split over a pending pioneering bill that would regulate the controversial oil-extraction technique known as fracking.

Legislation by Sen. Fran Pavley, D-Agoura Hills, would, for the first time in the nation, require oil companies to disclose details of the chemicals, locations and procedures involved with hydraulic fracturing and related “well-stimulation” activities. The bill also would require that well sites be permitted and that the state conduct a scientific study of hydraulic fracturing, among other things.

In fracking, large quantities of water and sand as well as various chemicals are injected to free up oil and natural gas locked deep underground in shale formations. Another extraction method uses acid-solution injections to release the hydrocarbons.

Most environmental groups in testimony Wednesday before the Assembly Appropriations Committee backed Pavley. But the Sierra Club said it opposed the bill, arguing that it doesn’t give the public enough information to protect water and air from potential contamination.

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