

# Fracking for dollars

**G**ov. John Kasich extols the energy and economic-growth potential of Ohio's oil and natural-gas reserves. Extracting these riches from the state's shale deposits often requires a controversial technique called hydraulic fracturing, or fracking.

The process pumps toxic chemicals and sand into underground rock formations to release trapped gas and oil. It applies lots of pressure and generates lots of polluted waste water. If fracking is not adequately regulated by government, it threatens groundwater, streams, air quality and public health.

Ohio needs — and does not have — reasonable but effective rules to govern fracking, which will protect the envi-

ronment while enabling the state to benefit from the production of its resources.

A new report ominously suggests that the natural-gas industry is making big political contributions, in Ohio and in Congress, as part of a successful decade-long lobbying campaign to escape proper oversight of fracking.

The study by the nonpartisan good-government group Common Cause reports that natural-gas interests have donated more than \$20 million to the campaigns of current members of Congress, including \$600,000 to Ohio lawmakers. State elected officials in Ohio collected an extra \$2.8 million in the past decade.

Ohio's leading beneficiaries of industry largesse named in the study are listed below.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency concluded in 2004 that fracking does not pose major risks to environmental and human health. But a new EPA report, scheduled for release next year, is expected to take a more critical view of the process.

Done properly, fracking can help Ohio and the nation create jobs, cut energy costs and reduce dependence on foreign oil. But it is far less likely to be done properly if energy producers are allowed to police themselves — or not. Industry campaign contributions must not be allowed to dictate the debate over fracking regulation — or cause Ohioans to believe that they will.

*This was excerpted from an editorial in The Toledo Blade.*

## NATURAL-GAS INDUSTRY'S CONTRIBUTIONS IN PAST DECADE:



Gov. John  
Kasich (R):  
\$213,519



U.S. House  
Speaker  
John  
Boehner  
(R):  
\$186,900



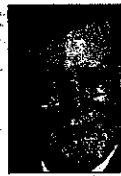
U.S. Sen.  
Rob Port-  
man (R):  
\$91,000



Ohio Sec-  
retary of  
State Jon  
Husted  
(R):  
\$84,750



State  
House  
Speaker  
Bill Batch-  
elder (R):  
\$71,195



State Sen-  
ate Presi-  
dent Tom  
Niehaus  
(R):  
\$64,713



Former  
Gov. Ted  
Strickland  
(D):  
\$87,450