

THE CARSON LEGACY
Environmental Pioneer's Efforts Continue In Prophetic Coincidence

Today, Monday, April 14, 2014, we commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the passing of Rachel L. Carson. She is credited by environmentalists and concerned citizens around the world as the Mother of the Environmental Movement for her pivotal role in raising awareness of man-made threats to the environment. Her seminal work, *Silent Spring* ignited a grassroots environmental consciousness that led to cleaner air, cleaner water and ultimately to the formation of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Needless to say, *Silent Spring* remains required reading in environmental courses and the environmental movement she started continuous.

Carson's contribution was recognized posthumously with the nation's highest civilian honor, the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Moreover, in addition to having numerous schools and international environmental centers and institutes named after her, the United States Postal Service has issued a stamp in her honor, a recognition also bestowed upon her by other countries.

In her final public speech titled *The Pollution of the Environment*, Carson warned of contamination and the need to fight for a cleaner and safer environment for our children and future generations.

It is ironic that Pennsylvania, Carson's birth state, is ground zero for today's greatest environmental challenge, unregulated fracking – formally known as hydraulic fracturing – that employs a concoction of proprietary secret toxic chemicals and highly pressurized water to break-up rock formations deep underground so that oil and gas may be extracted. Environmentalist and concerned citizens everywhere fervently oppose fracking because it (i) injects unknown toxic chemicals into the ground that are inexplicably exempt from the Safe Drinking Water Act, (ii) utilizes an unregulated technique that is susceptible (in the best of circumstances) to major hazardous spills, and (iii) exposes nearby residents to potentially significant adverse health effects, all to extract a product that further contributes to pollution and is the direct cause of the world's worst environmental disasters, *e.g.*, the BP oil disaster in the Gulf of Mexico, the Exxon Valdez running aground in Alaska, and the Shell Oil Carousel calamity in Southern California.

In a coincidence that is nothing short of prophetic, a working-class city of 100,000 residents located in Southern California, almost 3,000 miles from

Pennsylvania, ground zero for the fight against fracking and the birth state of the pioneer of the environmental movement, will tomorrow consider approving a highly anticipated municipal report that supports the extension of the first-in-the-state moratorium banning any new or expanded oil and gas drilling, which includes fracking and other fracking-like applications. The report calls for the moratorium to remain in effect until such time studies are conducted regarding the use of any “oil and gas stimulation methods” and appropriate regulatory standards are in place to protect the environment and residents. It is perfectly fitting that this environmentally-minded city by pure happenstance named *Carson*, shares the name of the environmental movement’s pioneer – Rachel L. Carson.

The City of Carson first took its courageous action to impose a moratorium last month, in response to a swelling public outcry opposing the proposed project by Occidental Petroleum to construct over 200 new oil and gas extraction wells located less than a few hundred feet from Carson homes. The Carson City Council voted unanimously to impose the first-in-the-state moratorium banning all oil and gas well stimulation applications, because – depending on who and when you ask at Occidental Petroleum – this proposed project may or may not utilize fracking or fracking-like applications,.

Oil and gas extraction in the City of Carson predates the City’s incorporation, and some oil and gas extraction continues today, albeit at significantly reduced levels. But “experts” believe that a previously productive oil and gas reserve field located in Carson has billions of dollars worth of oil and gas remaining that can now be extracted using fracking and fracking-like application.

Ms. Carson would be proud to once again be associated with a pioneering environmental effort, this time to ban questionable and potentially dangerous oil and gas extraction applications that could wreak tremendous harm to our environment. So, on this day when we commemorate the departure of a strong advocate for environmental justice, we are reminded that her legacy is alive and well, especially in a city that is deeply proud to coincidentally share her name.

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