



In Ohio, shale energy has helped drive down the unemployment rate to less than six percent. Along with the new jobs there has been unprecedented capital investment in the state by the shale supply chain (over 10 billion in 2014 alone) and incredible wealth creation among land owners in SE Ohio.

Yet, shale remains controversial in Ohio and in other parts of the US. Maryland and New York continue to ban horizontal fracking of shale. In other states, most notably California, it is the local jurisdictions that have been aggressive in enacting regulations to limit or ban horizontal fracking.

Now, Colorado has become front and center in the shale debate with the 2014 November elections as the backdrop. This article in *The Hill* describes a potential rift among Colorado Democrats because of two anti fracking ballot initiatives that are now opposed by both the sitting Democratic Governor (John Hickenlooper) and the sitting Democratic US Senator (Mark Udall). The political concern is that with both Hickenlooper and Udall up for reelection this Fall they cannot afford to lose support from a Democratic base that supports the initiatives.

Colorado is considered a swing state politically that leans slightly Democrat. *The Cook Political Report* ranks each state by its partisan voting index. The five states ranked most evenly between Republicans and Democrats are Colorado, Iowa, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Virginia. Three of these five states (CO, OH, and PA) are at or near the center of the shale energy play. An issue as polarizing as shale energy will play a major role in the political races in these states.

Shale Energy is just in its infancy. As the economic impact grows – so will the political implications. Right now, this looks to be more problematic for the Democrats.

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