

Gas Drilling Puts New York Drinking Water at Risk

Hydraulic fracturing or “hydrofracking” is a drilling process which involves injecting large amounts of water, sand, and chemical additives (some toxic) into shale formations to separate rock fissures and gain access to the gas below them.



What is the Marcellus Shale?

The Marcellus Shale is a methane-(gas) rich rock formation under 28 New York counties, as well as other states in the region. Recent advances in drilling allow the gas industry to extract previously inaccessible gas from these shale deposits. Gas companies have already purchased thousands of acres of leases in New York State.

What Can We Expect from Hydrofrack Gas Drilling in NYS?

- Drilling wastes immense amounts of water—**3-9 million gallons of water are required to fracture a well and a single well may be fractured up to 18 times**, releasing heavy metals and radiation from deep within the earth.
- Fracking fluids will be released into the air and groundwater, threatening public health. Dr. Theo Colburn’s analysis of fracking fluids in western states found **carcinogenic and radioactive elements in the fracking fluid**. These cannot be filtered out of our water supply. Farming communities where drilling has occurred have experienced incidences of brain lesions, animals with malformed placentas leading to stillbirths, and other problems.
- Fracking fluids **contaminate farmland, damaging organic and local food production**. This will force many upstate farmers to go out of business.
- Under current law, companies can drill 150 feet from people’s homes and private water wells, and 50 feet from a stream. Once a well is dug, drilling continues 24 hours a day with round-the-clock noise and bright lights all night, the latter a grave danger to migrating birds.
- **More vehicle pollution:** Each fracking episode entails 600-800 truck trips to deliver water to the well pad, as well as several hundred trips to haul away contaminated water.
- **Japanese, Indian and European corporations are now buying up leases** or investing in US drilling companies, and already own large swathes of Marcellus Shale. They are positioned to export much of this gas for profit, calling into question industry’s claim that natural gas resources will enable the US to be energy independent.
- The destruction of wildlife habitat: Roads and pipelines built for gas drilling fragment and degrade natural habitats.
- Greenhouse gas emissions released by the extraction and transportation of natural gas and the burning of the gas itself contribute to global warming.

- Gas drilling could also force the City to construct a filtration plant at a cost of \$10 billion to \$20 billion, which would translate into a minimum 30 percent increase in water rates. However, **no filtration technology is capable of removing some of the toxins found in fracked water, such as radioactive particles.**
- Hydrofracked gas can leak into the water system, and cause water tunnels and pipes to explode, damaging the system we rely on to transport our water to us.

We Need a Statewide Ban on Hydrofracking

Toxic gas extraction is too dangerous for *any* watershed. Accidents happen; oil and gas interests should not come before community interests. Since watersheds exist throughout New York State, and include wells and aquifers, gas drilling should not be permitted anywhere within the state.

New regulations are needed to protect our water and address climate change by phasing out the use of fossil fuels (coal and gas) and investing in truly renewable energy solutions such as wind, solar, and geothermal as well as conservation.

How You Can Help

- See the Environmental Committee's blog: <http://ecokvetch.blogspot.com/> (this handout is posted on our blog, with **clickable links**--you can download it as a **PDF** and send it to others.)
- ⇒ **Sign the petition** at <http://www.thepetitionsite.com/1/NY-Statewide-Ban-On-Natural-Gas-Drilling>
- ⇒ **Contact your representatives** and request a statewide ban of 'natural' gas drilling.
 - To contact your NYS Assembly member go to this site: <http://assembly.state.ny.us/mem/>
 - To contact the NYS Senate: http://www.nysenate.gov/contact_form
- Visit www.un-naturalgas.org for extensive information about drilling in New York and Pennsylvania as well as links to petitions for both states.
- Dr. Theo Colburn's site has some of the best scientific information on the gas drilling which has already taken place in Colorado, Montana, New Mexico, Washington, Wyoming, Texas and Pennsylvania. : <http://www.endocrinedisruption.com/home.php>
- The Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter has been active in the issue and has many local branches--some may be near your area: <http://newyork.sierraclub.org/>
- See www.shaleshock.org for more information
- **Please pass this information along** to your friends, neighbors, co-workers, etc.

For more information or to get involved,
contact the PSFC Environmental Committee
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