

## ***Just the Hydrofrack Facts – 2011 Update***

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 during the night.
- 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. Drilling brings us farther away from solving the climate crisis.
- 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.

## Pending Legislation & How You Can Help

### National:

The **FRAC Act (The Fracturing Responsibility and Awareness of Chemicals Act)** would require drillers to disclose public chemicals they intend it use in hydraulic fracturing. At present, fracking is largely exempt from the Safe Drinking Water Act and drilling companies are not generally required to make public the chemicals they use.

### New York State:

- **A.6541 Englebright** - A 5-year moratorium on horizontal hydraulic fracturing
- **S.4220 Avella** - An all out ban on hydraulic fracturing in New York State
- **A.3245 Lifton/S.3472 Oppenheimer** - Restore Local Protections over Natural Gas Development
- **A.2922 Sweeney/S.425 Krueger** - Regulate Fracking Fluids

***\*\* Please urge your representatives to support these bills\*\****

See the **Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter website** ([http://newyork.sierraclub.org/gas\\_drilling.html](http://newyork.sierraclub.org/gas_drilling.html)) for more information about pending legislation related to hydrofracking and grassroots action.

## Learn More

- Dr. Theo Colburn's site has some of the best scientific information on the gas drilling issue: <http://www.endocrinedisruption.com/home.php>
- Visit [www.un-naturalgas.org](http://www.un-naturalgas.org) and <http://www.catskillcitizens.org/> for more information
- Sign the petition for a state-wide ban of hydrofracking at <http://www.thepetitionsite.com/1/NY-Statewide-Ban-On-Natural-Gas-Drilling>
- See our blog: <http://ecokvetch.blogspot.com> for a PDF version of this document with clickable links.