



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Liz Krueger

Senator Krueger and Colleagues Protect New York's Water; Mandate Moratorium For Marcellus Shale Drilling

LIZ KRUEGER August 5, 2010

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(New York, NY) Late Tuesday night, Senator Krueger and her Democratic colleagues passed a moratorium on gas drilling in the Marcellus Shale, a practice that could lead to the disastrous contamination of the State's water supply . Through the moratorium, gas and oil companies would be restricted from hastily drilling in the watershed, a process typically done through hydrolic drilling or hydro-fracking. By enacting this moratorium, New York State will protect the health and economic well-being of all 19 million New Yorkers.

The moratorium, S8129B (Thompson), would be effective through May 15, 2011, and would allow more time for a full review of the risks of hydro-fracking. Hydro-fracking is a process of gas drilling by which millions of water mixed with chemicals are blasted into the earth to break up shale rock, releasing the natural gas, which is embedded inside the rock. However, the exact make-up of the chemical "cocktail" used in the fracking process is not known because drilling companies closely guard these ingredients, claiming that information about specific mixtures needs to be kept secret from competitors. Therefore there is no way of monitoring or tracking which chemicals are seeping into the Earth, and New York's water supply, because the exact chemicals are unknown.

“We, in the Senate, were in a position to make a responsible decision about our environment to protect one of New York’s most precious resources, our watershed, and I’m very happy we made the right decision,” said Senator Liz Krueger (D-Manhattan). “We need to learn from the areas around us like Pennsylvania, who have paid dearly for rushing into drilling without fully analyzing the consequences. We need to take time to ‘do our homework,’ and get the facts. I am proud to be among those who supported Senator Thompson’s bill to act today—so that we don’t have to re-act tomorrow.”

The side effects of this process are extraordinarily costly and personally devastating, as families across Pennsylvania and other States have learned, after rushing into drilling. On top of the economic and health concerns, there are considerable safety hazards within the untested drilling process; earlier this month, a well in Pennsylvania exploded, taking two lives. In May, an explosion at another well took another life.

“We need to learn more before we continue down a road that can have devastating impacts on our communities and all the people of New York State. Environmental risks and the impact of environmental harm do not have boundaries: the health and safety of all new Yorkers is at risk, whether we have clean water or we have contamination that can last for decades— it will be paid for by us all.”

“For me this is simple: do the homework, give ourselves some more time to make sure we are not doing anything to do harm to the people of New York or to the future of the environmental stewardship of our State.”