



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Suzi Oppenheimer

# **Oppenheimer and Democratic Colleagues Call for Investigation into Potential Harms of Hydrofracking**

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ISSUE:

- [Energy](#)
- [Environment](#)
- [Local Government](#)

On April 25, 2012, Senator Suzi Oppenheimer (D-Mamaroneck) and the Democratic Conference hosted a public forum on hydraulic fracturing, also known as “hydrofracking.” A capacity crowd attended the forum, including environmental activists, legislators, economists, healthcare professionals and residents from throughout New York State. Attendees at the forum discussed issues and potential health care concerns about hydrofracking, a form of natural gas drilling.

The hydraulic fracturing process combines a series of chemicals with water and injects the mixture at high speeds into the ground in an attempt to extract natural gas. It has come under criticism as potentially hazardous to ground water supplies

and as a possible cause of increased seismic activity. Because the State is currently considering whether to permit hydraulic drilling, the forum provided a much needed opportunity for experts and area residents to discuss the potential long-term impacts of hydrofracking on the state.

Senator Oppenheimer is a co-sponsor of Senate bill S.4220-A, which would continue the ban on hydraulic fracturing in New York unless and until these potentially devastating health and safety concerns are fully addressed. “We must ensure that before any natural gas development practices are implemented, they are deemed sustainable, safe and properly regulated,” said Oppenheimer.

The Senator also authors legislation, Senate Bill S. 3472, which would codify the rights of municipalities to determine for themselves whether to permit hydrofracking under their own generally applicable local land use laws. “I cannot imagine a more quintessentially local issue than whether to permit this type of industrial activity within a town or village’s boundaries,” observed Oppenheimer.

“As an elected official, there is no greater priority than protecting the health and safety of our residents,” Senator Oppenheimer explained. “Before we allow companies to drill for natural gas through this process, we must be fully informed about how the process will impact our citizens and our vital natural resources. Continuing to research and gather information on the potential effects of hydrofracking only better prepares New Yorker’s to make safe and conscious decisions regarding the future of our State,” concluded Oppenheimer. “I call on my colleagues from both sides of the isle to ensure that our great state retains its natural beauty and resources and only allows hydrofracking when it is safe and properly regulated.”