

NEW YORK STATE SENATE

DEMOCRATIC CONFERENCE

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Senate Democratic Conference Calls For Moratorium On Hydraulic Fracturing

(Albany, NY) The Senate Democratic Conference today called for action to enact a moratorium on hydraulic fracturing and require a comprehensive health impact study. The moratorium will provide experts more time to assess concerns about the potential impacts hydrofracking will have on New York's environment and economy.

"The Senate Democratic Conference wants to ensure that before any drilling is allowed in New York State we are well informed about the process and its potential impacts," **Democratic Conference Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins** said. "Establishing a moratorium will allow environmental and health professionals to determine what impacts hydrofracking will have and how they will affect our state's long-term future."

Bill sponsor, Senator Tony Avella, said, "It would be irresponsible to begin the hydrofracking process in New York before our state's medical and environmental experts have enough time to determine what impacts the drilling process will have. This common-sense legislation will give our state's experts the time they need to ensure our environment and health will not be adversely impacted, and I urge my colleagues in the Republican/IDC coalition to bring it to Senate the floor for a vote."

The legislation supported by the Senate Democratic Conference is [S.4236-A](#), sponsored by Senator Tony Avella. This bill, which has also been sponsored in the Assembly by Assemblyman Bob Sweeney, would impose a moratorium on hydrofracking until May 15, 2015. This moratorium will enable experts to determine the potential environmental and health impacts the hydraulic fracturing process will have before drilling is allowed to proceed.

Senator Joe Addabbo said, "I don't think we should put substances in our water that we can't pronounce and that we can't be certain won't poison us and our precious drinking water supplies. Shooting a toxic cocktail of ethan-diol potassium hydroxide, ammonia persulfate magnesium nitrate, cristabolite polyethoxylated alkanol, formaldehyde sodium hydroxide and many other suspect chemicals into the earth, with potentially irreversible environmental and public health impacts, isn't worth the risk. It is vital that we continue to delay the issuance of any drilling permits; do our homework with a comprehensive, unbiased health impact study; and have strict, smart laws and regulations in place to safeguard New York's environment and residents from any possible harm."

Senator Neil Breslin said, “It is imperative that we give the Legislature additional time to assess the true public health and environmental impacts of hydraulic fracturing. Allowing for the completion of a comprehensive health impact assessment will ensure we have all the facts we need to fully understand how hydraulic fracturing will potentially impact our communities.”

Senator Adriano Espallat said, “New Yorkers across the state are sounding the alarm about the irreversible damage hydrofracking will inflict on our state. Nothing is more important than the health and safety of our citizens, and attempting to move forward without understanding the risks is beyond irresponsible. I’ve taken my constituents to Pennsylvania to see the damage caused by fracking firsthand. I am committed to preventing this mistake before it’s too late, and we need to educate people about the dangers posed by fracking.”

Senator Brad Hoylman said, “We shouldn’t be fracking first and asking questions later. That’s why I’m co-sponsoring S.4236-A along with my Senate Democratic colleagues to demand a moratorium on fracking until a comprehensive health impact assessment is completed. The health of our kids and the purity of our ground water is just too important to risk it.”

Senator Liz Krueger said, “A majority of the Senate has indicated that they feel hydrofracking poses grave threats to our drinking water, our public health, and our billion-dollar agricultural industry. This commonsense legislation, which has already passed the Assembly, would simply freeze any well-permitting and require completion of a full, thorough health impact assessment. This bill is a test of whether this legislature functions. We should act on bills that have passed the Assembly and have the votes to pass the Senate.”

Senator George Latimer said, “Passing a moratorium in order to thoroughly analyze the health impacts of every hydro fracking issue is a prudent thing to do. It’s helpful to the people we represent if they trust that we have examined every option before making a long term decision with significant community impact. With as much information as possible, the residents of the potentially affected areas will be able to weigh the short term economic impacts with the long term health risks associated with this practice.”

Senator Bill Perkins said, “I have witnessed, along with other colleagues, the promise of hydrofracking as an economic opportunity, but in truth it brings with it disastrous consequences to the environment as well as to the health and well-being of individuals in the community. Basically what I saw was water that was contaminated and special arrangements having to be made for families to import potable water in tanks that are called ‘buffalos’, paid for by the hydrofracking companies in reparation for the destruction of the wells. This is not a welcomed consequence for the families or the communities in general. In addition, the purported employment opportunities come with increased migration from surrounding states, and with it, crimes that include increased substance abuse, drunkenness and general rowdiness and criminal behavior. These experiences taught us that before we go full blast with fracking we must take careful precaution before we destroy our environment and communities. We must take sincere note that there is more potential for environmental disaster and community destruction than an economic boon.”

Senator Ted O'Brien said, "My district in the Finger Lakes Region is home to some of our nation's most pristine fresh water sources, acclaimed vineyards, and beautiful landscapes. Preserving these natural resources is not only important to our environmental and public health, but to our economic future as well. Until we truly understand the potential impact of hydraulic fracturing on our families, our environment, and our emerging industries; we must not allow any new fracking projects to take place in New York. A moratorium will give us more time to study this process and ensure the safety and future prosperity of the Finger Lakes Region and our entire state."

Senator Gustavo Rivera said, "Protecting the public's personal and environmental health is the chief concern in making the hydrofracking decision and it is essential that we know its health impacts before we allow drilling in our state. We cannot make an informed decision without knowing the benefits and disadvantages our communities will face. A two-year ban will give our scientific and health experts the necessary time to further study the impacts of hydrofracking so that we can, as a State, better understand its potential health impact on our communities and our environment."

Senator Jose Serrano said, "Countless studies continue to indicate that the effects of hydrofracking are not only harmful to our environment, but also to our health. We must do everything we can to reject a practice that will cause irreversible harm to our communities and families. I urge my colleagues to consider all of the negative consequences associated with fracking and support S.4236-A."

Senator Daniel Squadron said, "We can't allow fracking to become the mistake our generation makes for the next. Too much is at stake -- for our health, our environment, and our state -- to take this risk. New York must implement a state-wide ban now. Thank you to all of my colleagues and the advocates who have made their voices heard on the dangers of fracking."

Senator Cecilia Tkaczyk said, "High volume Hydro-fracking relies on the use of pollutants and toxic chemicals, and the byproducts of the process include heavy metals and radioactive materials. We know exposure to these substances causes a wide range of diseases and health problems. Before we ever allow high-volume fracking to take place in New York, we must be certain we are not putting our communities and schools at increased risk of cancer, asthma, cardiovascular disease and other illnesses. Senator Avella's proposed moratorium would allow us to fully assess the health impact of fracking, and I applaud him for introducing this important piece of legislation."

Katherine Nadeau, Water & Natural Resources Director for Environmental Advocates of New York, said, "Senators Klein and Skelos need to take their foot off the fracking moratorium's neck and allow the 61 other senators elected and paid by the people of New York to do their jobs. This is unacceptable, and a continued disgrace for a chamber that certainly needs no further embarrassment."

Wes Gillingham, Co-Founder and Program Director of the Catskill Mountainkeeper, said "We need the Moratorium bill to come to the floor. The Senate leadership is standing in the way of the democratic process. Mr. Skelos, Mr. Klein, and Governor Cuomo, it is time to listen to the

voice of the people of New York, pass the moratorium and sign it into law so we can get the time to do the vital work of protecting our communities, water, land, and health.”

Eric Weltman, Senior State Organizer with Food & Water Watch, said, “The only way to protect all New Yorkers from the dangers and damage of fracking is to ban it entirely. Any legislation that will help move the state toward a permanent ban is sensible. Governor Cuomo and the senate leadership should acknowledge the will of most New Yorkers and officially take the possibility of fracking off the table.”

Susan Zimet of Frack Action said, “It’s unconscionable that the majority coalition won’t bring the moratorium to the floor for a vote and pass it. In 2010 the moratorium passed with overwhelming, bipartisan support, and we know that it would today as well if it were allowed for a vote. It’s time for senators like Tom Libous who are beholden to the interests of the gas industry to recuse themselves and let this bill come to the floor for a vote.”

Kate Sinding, Director of the Community Fracking Defense Project for the Natural Resources Defense Council, said, “Now is the time for our senators to act to ensure that all the risks of fracking are carefully, completely and scientifically evaluated before any new fracking is permitted in New York. The enactment of a moratorium until the health risks have been fully considered is the surest way to protect New Yorkers and give the force of law to Governor Cuomo’s promise to let the science govern New York’s decision making.”

David Braun, Strategist and Lead Organizer for New Yorkers Against Fracking, said, “As reports of water and air contamination from fracking in other states continue to emerge, it’s become clear that fracking isn’t safe. The lives of New Yorkers are more important than a few low paying jobs. While banning fracking entirely is the right thing to do, the least we can do is pass the two year moratorium and protect the people of New York.”

NYPIRG Environmental Campaign Organizer Joe Stelling said, “Governor Cuomo promised to let science guide his decision on fracking, but all we have seen is a review process riddled with industry collusion and conflicts of interest. The Senate has the power to put a bill on the Governor’s desk demanding that real science be carried out and negative health consequences from fracking be fully understood. Failure to bring this bill up for a vote would be a huge disservice to the people of New York.”

Roger Downs, Chapter Conservation Director of the Sierra Club, said “In other parts of the US, fracking has been linked to a broad spectrum of health impacts ranging from loss of smell, memory problems, and headaches to serious respiratory illnesses, neuropathies, and cancers” said Roger Downs, Conservation Director for the Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter. “We commend the Senate Democratic Conference for their relentless commitment to providing the necessary time and resources to expose the public health dangers of the drilling industry.”

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