

ANSONIA INDEPENDENT DEMOCRATS  
PROPOSED RESOLUTION SUPPORTING A MORATORIUM ON GAS  
DRILLING DEVELOPMENT IN NEW YORK STATE

February 18, 2010

WHEREAS the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) is considering requests to allow development of a form of natural gas drilling known as hydraulic fracturing “hydrofracking” in large areas of New York State which includes the New York City watershed;

WHEREAS hydrofracking is a process in which millions of gallons of water mixed with chemicals are pumped into the ground to crack rock and release natural gas, and results in tons of polluted wastewater which must be processed and disposed of;

WHEREAS a draft Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement (SGEIS) was issued by the NYSDEC on September 30, 2009 which proposed to issue permits for hydraulic fracturing under certain conditions;

WHEREAS a report prepared for the New York City Department of Environmental Protection jointly by Hazen and Sawyer, Environmental Engineers and Scientists specializing in water supply, treatment, distribution, and risk management, and Leggette, Brashears, and Graham, Inc, specializing in groundwater geology, environmental investigation, risk analysis, etc., entitled “Impact Assessment of Natural Gas Production in the New York City Water Supply Watershed” (the Hazen Report) was published on December 22, 2009.

WHEREAS the Hazen Report found that the risk analysis contained in NYSDEC’s draft SGEIS is based on unlikely scenarios and assumptions some of which are non-conservative

WHEREAS the Hazen Report noted that chemical composition of many of the additives used in hydraulic fracturing is not known, or have not been disclosed

based on business trade secrets, and that many of the known chemicals are toxic to the environment and human health;

WHEREAS the Hazen Report found that hydraulic fracturing development in New York could result in

1) up to 6000 drilling “wells” over the coming decades, each of which would require use of millions of gallons of chemical-laced water,

2) high volumes of heavy truck traffic, extensive industrial and transportation development,

3) disposal of millions of gallons of chemical and naturally occurring radiation-laced waste water, and require construction of wastewater treatment facilities,

4) a risk to the New York City water supply infrastructure (aqueducts, pipes and water tunnels) due to disruption of rock formations,

5) risks to the environment, ecosystem and air quality, and

6) seepage of toxic chemicals into the water supply;

WHEREAS the Hazen Report noted that the risks associated with natural gas development cannot be eliminated, but recommended that to decrease the risks to the New York water supply, the following mitigation measures be put in place before development is allowed to commence:

1) provisions that prohibit or limit introduction of large volumes of hazardous and potentially hazardous chemicals into the watershed, provisions for sharing chemical composition data for all drilling and fracturing additives, and provisions for use of additives that are non-toxic, or whose toxicity is well understood;

2) prohibiting wellpads within 1000 feet of streams and 2000 feet of reservoirs (the draft SGEIS would allow wellpads within 150 feet of streams and 300 feet of reservoirs);

3) prohibit transporting of chemicals and waste products on roads adjacent to public water supply reservoirs or major inflow streams;

4) require that the effectiveness of waste flowback water treatment be established before approval of initial well development, and that gas well permits be limited to the treatment capacity in place at the time of well permit approval;

5) because hydraulic fracturing in proximity to naturally occurring rock fracture systems that intersect NYCDEP tunnels will increase the risk of tunnel liner structural failure and contaminated drinking water, that natural gas well construction be precluded within a buffer zone of seven miles from NYCDEP subsurface infrastructure (current regulations require SEQRA reviews for issuance of a permit to drill within 1000 feet of subsurface water supply infrastructure);

6) regulation of water withdrawal to protect animal and plant habitats and ensure maintaining adequate water supply for the population;

7) provision of sufficient regulatory and inspection staffing, coordination communication and information sharing among applicable city, state and federal regulatory agencies;

WHEREAS many aspects of hydraulic fracturing are currently exempt from federal regulations and the oversight of federal environmental agencies;

WHEREFORE in light of the potential risks associated with hydraulic drilling development including permanent damage to the water supply, environment, and ecosystem,

THEREFORE, IT IS RESOLVED that the Ansonia Independent Democrats calls on the Governor and the New York State Legislature to place a moratorium (or enact a ban) on hydraulic fracturing until an adequate environmental study is completed showing that hydraulic fracturing can be done safely and without impacting the New York State water supply, and until adequate mitigation

regulations and facilities are in place to adequately protect New York's water supply and environment from such operations; and calls on Congress to enact laws such as HR 2766 and S 1215 to eliminate the exemption of hydraulic fracturing from federal regulation under the Safe Drinking Water Act.