



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 2191

Resolution calling on the New York State Legislature, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, and New York State Governor David Paterson to prohibit hydraulic fracturing combined with horizontal drilling for the extraction of natural gas within the boundaries of New York State.

By Council Members Avella, Barron, Brewer, James, Mark-Viverito, Mendez and Arroyo

Whereas, Clean drinking water is vital to the health of every community, and every effort should be made to preserve its quality; and

Whereas, The majority of the reservoirs that supply New York City with its drinking water are located above the Marcellus Shale geological formation, which contains large deposits of natural gas; and

Whereas, The water supplies of many other communities throughout New York State are also located above the Marcellus Shale formation; and

Whereas, Drilling for natural gas within the Marcellus Shale formation was long thought to be economically unviable, but recent technological advances and increasing interest in the use of natural gas for fuel have made natural gas drilling in the Marcellus Shale possible; and

Whereas, The main technological advance that has made drilling within the Marcellus Shale viable is a combination of horizontal drilling with a technique known as hydraulic fracturing, wherein natural gas deposits are freed using large quantities of water, combined with multiple chemical additives; and

Whereas, Many of the chemicals contained in hydraulic fracturing fluids are known to be toxic, and some have been associated with public health risks such as developmental delays and cancers; and

Whereas, Companies performing hydraulic fracturing are often resistant to revealing which chemicals their fracturing fluids contain, making it difficult for communities to assess their risk due to drilling operations;

and

Whereas, Each stage of the hydraulic fracturing process presents public health risks due to chemical contamination, including the transportation of chemicals to drilling sites, the use of chemicals during drilling operations, and the storage of the millions of gallons of used fluids that are produced through the drilling process; and

Whereas, Communities located above the Marcellus Shale would be further burdened by the construction of new roads to accommodate drilling sites, increased traffic, and potential decreases in air quality due to emissions from drilling operations; and

Whereas, A prohibition on horizontal drilling combined with hydraulic fracturing within the boundaries of New York State would provide long-term protection of the New York City water supply, the water supplies of other communities located on or near the Marcellus Shale formation, and of the environment within New York State from the potentially serious adverse impacts of the hydraulic fracturing process; and

Whereas, A prohibition on drilling for natural gas using the horizontal hydraulic fracturing technique may be enacted through State legislation or established through a determination by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) that this technique is not safe for public health or the environment; and

Whereas, Governor Paterson may also seek a prohibition on drilling for natural gas within the watershed of the New York City drinking water supply by introducing such legislation in the State Legislature and actively promoting it; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls on the New York State Legislature, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, and New York State Governor David Paterson to prohibit hydraulic fracturing combined with horizontal drilling for the extraction of natural gas within the boundaries of New York State.

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