



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Antoine M. Thompson

Senator Antoine Thompson, Residents & Advocates Urge Moratorium on Gas Drilling Which Could Pollute New York's Drinking Water. "Protecting Our Drinking Water."

ANTOINE M THOMPSON August 17, 2010

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(Buffalo, NY) Gas drilling in New York could contaminate the drinking water of more than 12 million New York residents. Putting public safety over the interests of gas companies,

The Senate Democratic Majority has passed legislation sponsored by Senator Antoine Thompson (D-Parts of Buffalo and Niagara County) mandating a temporary moratorium on gas drilling ("hydro-fracking") to ensure adequate time to research safety measures and regulations. However, that legislation also requires passage in the State Assembly before it can be sent to the Governor's desk for approval.

The Senate, on August 3, 2010, overwhelmingly passed S8129B/Thompson by a vote of 48-9. This bill provides for a suspension, until May 15, 2011, of the issuance of new permits for the

drilling of a well which utilizes the practice of hydraulic fracturing. The legislation is now awaiting action by the Assembly before it can be sent to the Governor for his support.

Senator Thompson recently held a news conference, where he was joined by Josh Fox, producer of the HBO documentary called, “Gasland” and several residents from a Pennsylvania community where the hydro-fracking is taking place.

Thompson’s one year moratorium will help to accomplish several goals, including:

- Providing an extended period of time to study this new technology before permits are issued and drilling is allowed.
- Ensuring environmental experts and the public have time to review any proposed regulations and offer ways to make them stronger.
- Allocating enough time for the Legislature to review the DEC’s conclusions on the environmental impact of the gas drilling.

Senator Antoine Thompson, Chair of the Environmental Conservation Committee said, “Our drinking water in New York State could possibly be in jeopardy. We are simply asking for an in-depth study to be conducted before drilling decisions are made that could possibly have catastrophic affects on our natural resources and families. My colleagues and I in the Majority Senate passed legislation to put a halt on drilling temporarily, and I urge the Assembly to do the same.”

"This is huge news! Senator Thompson and the New York State Senate have shown incredible foresight and leadership by passing a moratorium on hydraulic fracturing to protect the citizens of New York State,” said Filmmaker Josh Fox, producer of Gasland. “This

is a thunderbolt that will and must echo across the nation and across the world. If sanity is to prevail and if the immense suffering and damage caused by this unregulated, unsafe and irresponsible drilling is to stop, it will be because the world listened to New York.

"The Sierra Club favors a moratorium which will give the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation sufficient time to develop regulations to protect our water and farmland concerning the new technology of mega-hydrofracturing for natural gas in shale. The very nature of the Marcellus Shale formations found in our State makes the safety of mega-hydrofracturing techniques here questionable," said Bob Ciesielski Sierra Club, Niagara Group, Chair.

"Contamination from hydro-fracking in Pennsylvania and other states demonstrates the real threats to New York's air, land, water, and people" said Brian Smith, WNY Program Director for Citizens Campaign for the Environment. "Citizens Campaign for the Environment commends Senator Thompson for championing sensible precautions and securing a proactive moratorium in the Senate, and we now strongly urge the Assembly and the Governor to take action and make this law as soon as possible."

What Is Hydro-Fracking?

Hydro-fracking is the process of breaking apart the rock under the earth, in which some natural resources are trapped, by forcing millions of gallons of waters mixed with chemicals into the ground. These chemicals then work their way into the regular water supply.

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. The public health concerns are well documented and economically, if something went wrong, New Yorkers cannot afford to foot the bill. On top of the economic and health concerns,

there are considerable safety hazards within the untested drilling process. Since May there have been two instances of gas wells exploding, and both took lives.

The first step toward preserving safety for New Yorkers has been taken by the Senate, and as the DEC is beginning to prepare for the drilling license process it is crucial that the Assembly takes immediate action.