



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James L. Seward

Extend Comment Period For Natural Gas Drilling Regs

JAMES L. SEWARD August 3, 2009

ONEONTA, 08/04/09 -- State Senator James L. Seward (R/C/I – Oneonta) is calling on the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to extend the public comment period on the draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) for natural gas drilling applications.

“Local governments as well as area families are concerned that permits are being approved under current regulations that fail to take into account new drilling technology,” said Senator Seward. **“Last December when I testified at a public hearing on natural gas drilling I stressed that local government notification and environmental impacts must be fully addressed before moving forward. Water sources must be protected and local roads cannot be compromised.**

“The public should not be kept in the dark when it comes to these vital protections. I urge the DEC to put everyone’s minds at ease by providing a proper update on the GEIS and ensuring that all interested parties have a chance to add input before the regulations are finalized and any permits are approved,” Seward added.

In a letter to DEC Commissioner Alexander “Pete” Grannis, Seward requests an update on the draft regulations that were scheduled to be unveiled this past spring. Seward also says extending the comment period will guarantee all interested parties a chance to express their concerns, resulting in the best possible final product.

"Utilizing the tremendous energy resources in the Marcellus Shale formation could play a significant role in helping us to reduce our dependence on foreign oil while at the same time providing a boost to the local economy. That being said, environmental protections must be in place and local governments need to be properly informed of drilling activities," Seward concluded.

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The complete letter from Senator Seward to Commissioner Grannis is attached.

July 8, 2009

Commissioner Alexander B. Grannis
Department of Environmental Conservation
625 Broadway
14th Floor
Albany, N.Y. 12233

RE: Natural Gas Drilling/ GEIS

Dear Commissioner Grannis:

I am writing to seek an update on the department's efforts to update the draft GEIS for natural gas drilling applications. Like others, I have been under the impression that the draft regulations would be issued by the department this past spring, and now we approach the middle of summer without the new process in place. Some of my constituents are concerned that permits are being approved under the current regulatory structure without

adequate accommodations for both water and highway protection.

Let me ask the department to consider two things as the new GEIS is finalized.

First, the local governments I represent have asked that the comment period be extended to lengthen full public participation and comment. I support the effort to ensure the broadest possible comment from the public.

Second, we as a state must ensure the proper regulatory structure is in place so that key issues are addressed: adequate staffing and supervision; protection of water and public roads; proper disposal of hydrofracking solutions and the appropriate notification of affected local governments.

We need local energy sources so we can reduce what we buy from nations who don't like us very much. At the same time, the public needs confidence in our regulatory structure that drilling and extraction will be done carefully and our roads and environment will be protected.

Thank you for your efforts.

Sincerely yours,

JAMES L. SEWARD

State Senator