



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Antoine M. Thompson

## Senate Collects Marcellus Shale Impact Data in Pennsylvania. Senator Thompson Hears Potential Benefits and Concerns From Businesses and Citizens Regarding Drilling

ANTOINE M THOMPSON December 15, 2009

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**(Buffalo, NY)** - Today, New York State Senator Antoine Thompson (D-parts of Erie and Niagara Counties), Chair of the Environmental Conservation Committee was in Towanda and Dimock, Pennsylvania on a fact finding mission regarding hydro fracturing of the Marcellus Shale formation to collect natural gas. Senator Thompson first met with officials from Chesapeake Energy, a company with plans to drill in New York State. He then traveled to Dimock, PA where he met with citizens who were subjects of a NY Times article last week after experiencing drinking water pollution problems and other issues that they believe are related to well drilling in their community by the Cabot Oil and Gas Company, a competitor of Chesapeake.

“As Chair of the New York State Senate Environmental Conservation Committee, I am committed to providing New Yorkers with the most efficient energy options available without compromising environmental integrity,” Senator Thompson said. “I am fully committed to doing a comprehensive and thoughtful review of the benefits and potential environmental impacts of hydro fracturing of Marcellus Shale in New York State.”

Marcellus Shale is a black, low density, organic rich shale that was formed by the sedimentation of marine, mud and clay deposits from ancient river deltas across the Appalachian Basin approximately 350 to 415 million years ago. It exists up to 9,000 feet below ground mainly beneath New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio and West Virginia.

In order to allow the gas to escape through the pore space, drillers create artificial fractures in the shale, predominately using a method called hydro fracturing by injecting a mixture of water, sand and gel at extremely high pressure to crack and prop open the shale.

At the first meeting, Senator Thompson heard from Chesapeake officials on the benefits of hydro fracturing and toured a couple of their well sites, one of which was being drilled and the other of which was actively producing gas.

According to Chesapeake's Senior Director of Corporate Development, Matt Sheppard, "We are proud to have hosted Senator Thompson and his staff so that we could demonstrate our approach to drilling for natural gas in an environmentally sensitive manner in Pennsylvania. Our efforts have had an enormous economic impact in that area, adding nearly 600 new jobs, providing landowners with more than \$700 million in payments the past year and paying local businesses more than \$100 million. We continue to believe that natural gas is a vital and valuable resource that can also enable the people of New York to play an important role in reducing our nation's dependence on foreign oil and do so in a way that is both environmentally sensitive and economically rewarding."

At the second meeting, Senator Thompson heard comments from Dimock, PA residents who are very concerned about the impacts of the drilling of Marcellus Shale on their community, citing impacts on drinking water and other environmental issues.

“We appreciate the Senator's interest in making this effort to get a full picture of what is involved in the natural gas drilling process utilizing horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracturing, technologies that when used together represent a new technique with what we regard as a troubled track record that requires vigilance on the part of citizenry and their representatives in order to safeguard public health and provide for proper stewardship of the environment,” said Michael Lebron of New Yorkers for Sustainable Energy Solutions Statewide (NYSESS).