



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Diane J. Savino

Savino Announces Passage of Moratorium on Gas Drilling; Protects New York's Water

DIANE J. SAVINO August 4, 2010

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Senate Bill Mandates Moratorium to allow for Comprehensive Study of Drilling in Marcellus Shale

(Albany, NY) Putting public safety over special interests, Senator Diane J. Savino (D-Staten Island/Brooklyn) announced yesterday passage of a moratorium on gas drilling in the

Marcellus Shale in order to prevent the potentially hazardous contamination of the state's water supply. Through the moratorium, gas and oil companies would be restricted from hastily endangering the health and economic well-being of more than 12 million local residents who draw their water from the affected area by engaging a process known as hydraulic fracturing or hydro-fracking.

This moratorium (S8129B), co-sponsored by Senator Savino, is effective through May 15, 2011, providing the state much-needed opportunity to fully review the potential side effects of this kind of drilling. 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. On top of the economic and health concerns, there are considerable safety hazards within the untested drilling process; earlier this month a well in Pennsylvania exploded taking two lives. In May, an explosion at another well took another life.

“Now is not the time to be risking our state's most precious natural resource and a commodity that's becoming increasingly rare—clean drinking water. We do not need to look any further than the devastation in the Gulf of Mexico to realize that there is no financial benefit worth risking the safety of New York's water supply. Until the public impact has been sufficiently assessed, we cannot endanger the drinking water source for millions of New Yorkers,” said Senator Savino

Mark Ruffalo, a Hudson Valley homeowner, actor and advocate on this issue said, "As a resident of Sullivan county I am relieved the state senate stepped up to the plate to institute sound, common sense policy on the issue of hydro-fracking. Protecting my family and neighbors and friends is why I have dedicated my time to raising awareness on this issue of critical importance."

Susan Zimet, Co-Director Frack Action and Ulster County Legislator said, "Albany has proven that when the will is there to do the right thing, they can come through with flying colors. Thank you Senator Sampson and the Democratic majority for bringing this critical legislation to the floor for a vote. And a special thank you to those Republican Senators whose vote put this over the top."

Julia Walsh, Co-Director Frack Action said, "I look forward to a swift passage of this bill through the Assembly and the Governor's signature. By enacting this moratorium New York State once again proves to be a leader on issues affecting the public's health, welfare and environment"

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.

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