



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

Addabbo: Let's Protect Our Drinking Water

JOSEPH P. ADDABBO JR August 11, 2010

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Senate Bill Co-Sponsored by Addabbo Mandates Moratorium to Allow for Comprehensive Study of Drilling in Marcellus Shale

Queens, NY, August 11, 2010 – Just back from the end of a rare summer session in Albany, NYS Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr., reports that due largely as a result of the public support to hold off on a natural gas drilling process known as hydrofracking, the Senate passed legislation that would put a hold on hydrofracking in the state. The legislation, which now goes to the Assembly for a vote, would stop the issuing of upstate drilling permits until May 2011.

Senator Addabbo noted, "I co-sponsored this moratorium bill (S8129B/Thompson) to provide the state a much-needed opportunity to fully review the potential negative side effects of this kind of drilling."

The Senate passed a 10-month moratorium on gas drilling in the Marcellus Shale 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 hydrofracking.

Hydrofracking 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.

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 hydrofracturing by injecting a mixture of water, sand and gel at extremely high pressure to crack and prop open the shale.

The side effects of this process are extraordinarily costly and personally devastating, as families across Pennsylvania and other states have learned only after the drilling had occurred. 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.

Addabbo, who spoke at a press conference on the issue at City Hall on Tuesday, August 10, said, "I believe this bill provides a rational, prudent approach to the practice of hydrofracking. This drilling process has possible short and long term health and safety implications and is the subject of a pending Department of Environmental

Conservation (DEC) report, which needs to be reviewed and evaluated. I look forward to working with the DEC on this issue as we seek to avoid any risks to our environment and personal safety.” The Senator also thanked his constituents for bringing this issue to his attention last year and the hundreds of residents across New York who signed petitions, wrote letters and attended rallies to show Albany that the hydrofracking legislation was desired.

Senator Antoine Thompson (D-parts of Erie and Niagara Counties), chair of the Senate’s Environmental Conservation Committee said, “In a recent round of hearings, the DEC received more than 14,000 comments on this issue. More time is needed to digest those comments and make an informed judgment if adequate safeguards can be put in place to allow hydrofracking while still protecting our valuable and irreplaceable fresh water. The decisions we make on this issue will determine the economic and environmental vitality of communities across the state for decades to come.

In light of the Gulf of Mexico drilling disaster, my colleagues and I believe that a 10-month delay to get it right is prudent and necessary.”

Senate Majority Conference Leader John L. Sampson said, “Keeping New Yorkers safe means preserving the sanctity of their access to clean, drinkable 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.

Much of the Southern Tier, Central New York, the Hudson Valley, and New York City all draw their water from the area proposed to be explored from the Marcellus Shale. That is why we must fully understand the impact of drilling, and potential consequences, before breaking ground. I applaud Senator Thompson and the many advocates and residents who fought tirelessly for this legislation.”

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 hydrofracking. Protecting my family and neighbors and friends is why I have dedicated my time to raising awareness on this issue of critical importance."

For more information, visit <http://open.nysenate.gov/legislation/api/1.0/html/bill/S8129B>.