



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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## Dec Extends Hydrofracking Public Comment - Again

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(11/30/11) - In an unexpected move, the Department of Environmental Conservation today extended the deadline of the public comment period for the proposed draft regulations for high-volume hydrofracking to Jan. 11 — essentially adding an extra month to the process.

The announcement was posted on the DEC's website and was apparently made at the agency's public hearing on the controversial natural gas extraction process being held in New York City today. According to people in the audience of the hearing, the room erupted in cheers at the news of the announcement.

The agency initially planned to end its public comment period on Dec. 12. Environmentalists concerned with hydrofracking, which uses a mixture of sand, chemicals and water to blast through rock and extract natural gas from below ground, wanted a longer public comment period after the new draft guidelines were issued in September. Agency officials had settled on the Dec. 12 date as a means of compromising.

The move will do little to temper concerns from the state's natural-gas industry, which has been pushing for hydrofracking permits to be granted by 2012. The agency says it has collected more than 13,000 comments on the process, which it is reviewing.

Ending the public comment period in January not only pushes the process back further, but likely could extend into the contentious legislative and budget session expected next year.