



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Velmanette Montgomery

Senate Democratic Conference Holds Public Forum on Hydrofracking

VELMANETTE MONTGOMERY April 25, 2012

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(Albany, NY) The Senate Democratic Conference today held a public forum on hydraulic fracturing also known as “hydrofracking.” The forum was attended by members of the Democratic Conference, as well as environmental activists, legislators, economists, healthcare professionals and residents from throughout New York State. Attendees at today’s forum discussed the issues and concerns about potential consequences and impacts of hydrofracking.

“The Senate Democratic Conference wants to ensure that before any drilling is allowed to proceed in New York, our state’s leaders and residents are well informed about this process and its potential impacts,” Democratic Conference Leader John Sampson said. “As legislators we have a responsibility to make informed decisions and base our actions on facts instead of wishful thinking or alarmist rhetoric.”

Hydraulic fracturing has come under criticism as potentially hazardous to ground water supplies and as a possible cause to increased seismic activity. The hydrofracking process combines a series of chemicals with water and injects the mixture at high speeds into the ground in an attempt to extract natural gas. Currently there is no hydraulic drilling in New York, and today’s forum provided the opportunity for experts and area residents to discuss hydrofracking and its potential long-term impacts on the state.

One of the bills discussed at the forum was S. 2697-A. Senator Montgomery, who is one of the sponsors of the bill, explained that it would help ensure that before any natural gas development practices are implemented, they will be deemed sustainable, safe and properly regulated. Montgomery applauded Senator Tony Avella for taking the lead on this issue on behalf of the Conference.

“Proponents of hydrofracking are trying to force approval and implementation of hydraulic fracturing in an election year rush with promises of economic revitalization, promises not borne out by the experience of other states and with no due consideration of the potentially devastating costs,” Senator Velmanette Montgomery said. “Hydraulic fracturing is serious business that also has serious side effects that could be damaging to our health and the overall vitality of our State. I am proud to join with my Democratic colleagues in announcing a comprehensive agenda to better inform New Yorkers of the possible health risks associated with high-volume hydraulic fracturing. Adoption of our legislative agenda is the ethical,

prudent, and responsible course of action.”

“Before we allow companies to drill for natural gas in our state, we must understand how this process will impact New Yorkers lives and health,” Senator Tony Avella said. “We have an obligation to put the health and safety of our state’s residents ahead of the desire for short-term financial gain. This bill ensures that generations of New Yorkers will grow up in a state that retains its natural beauty and resources and only allows hydrofracking that is safe and properly regulated.”

David Brain, on behalf of New Yorkers Against Fracking, said, “Fracking would be the greatest environmental disaster in New York’s history, and Governor Cuomo needs to realize that if he breaks it, he owns it. A decisive and growing body of science, as well as countless instances of water contamination and health disasters, shows that fracking cannot be done without sacrificing our health, economy, and environment, and an overwhelming majority of New Yorkers across the state want a ban.”

Dr. Larysa Dyrzka, M.D., said, “Despite requests to study health impacts from many medical professionals across the state, including the American Academy of Pediatrics of New York State, the Medical Society of the State of New York, the NYS Nurses Association the NYS Chapter of the Academy of Family Physicians, the University of Rochester Medical Center and Healthy Schools Network, a Health Impact Assessment of gas activities was not included in the budget. Such an HIA process would have addressed how gas drilling might impact the people of New York State, especially the most vulnerable. Senator Avella’s S.6772 HIA bill fills that glaring omission.”

Dr. Robert Oswald, Ph.D., and Dr. Michelle Bamberger, D.V.M., said, “Animals, especially livestock, are sensitive to the contaminants released into the environment by drilling and by its cumulative impacts. Documentation of thirty cases in eight states strongly implicates exposure to gas drilling operations in serious health effects on humans, companion animals, livestock, horses, and wildlife. Complete evidence regarding health impacts of gas drilling cannot be obtained due to incomplete disclosure of chemicals, incomplete testing of water, air, soil and animal tissues, and nondisclosure agreements. Without complete studies, given the many apparent adverse impacts on human and animal health, a ban on shale gas drilling is essential for the protection of public health. We strongly support Senator Avella’s S.8217 Health Impact Assessment Bill S.6772 and S.4200-A, prohibiting the use of horizontal drilling with high volume hydraulic fracturing for extraction of gas in New York State.”