



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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Statement re: DEC Decision to Delay Fracking Until Health Study is Complete

BRAD HOYLMAN February 14, 2013

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After sustained pressure from environmental activists and their allies in government, Governor Cuomo's administration took a positive step this week in the fight against hydrofracking in New York State. Per a request made by the Commissioner of the State Department of Health (DOH), the State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) announced that it would delay the finalization of its supplemental generic environmental impact statement (SGEIS) on hydrofracking until the ongoing study of the potential health impacts of this dangerous drilling method is completed. Before this announcement, DEC was slated to complete the SGEIS and issue final regulations before the end of this month, officially opening the door to hydrofracking. This delay effectively continues the prohibition on hydrofracking, as no permits can be issued before the final environmental impact statement is released.

I strongly believe that hydrofracking should be prohibited throughout all of New York State. In my first days in office, I submitted comments on DEC's draft hydrofracking regulations in which I strongly urged the agency to halt its march toward permitting tracking until the health study had been completed. I noted: "The sequencing and apparent lack of transparency of this process undermines public confidence in our State's commitment to

protect our precious natural resources and public health from the dangers of fracking,” and pushed DEC to commit to release the health impact analysis for public review and to formally consider additional public comments on any updated or amended regulations upon the completion of all ongoing analyses.

Earlier this month, I also joined Assembly Member Barbara Lifton and many of our colleagues in the Legislature in sending a letter to Governor Cuomo expressing serious concerns about the utter lack of transparency in DOH’s health impact study and urged DEC to withhold adoption of the final environmental impact statement pending the completion of a robust and public health impact review.

While I continue to have reservations about the secrecy of the health impact study, I am pleased that DOH and DEC heard our call and have agreed to slow the process down. We can't let the interests of the drilling industry dictate the pace of the state's review of the dangers of hydrofracking. The only way to ensure that this review is credible is to make the process by which it is conducted as open and transparent as possible.

–New York State Senator Brad Hoylman