



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Velmanette Montgomery

Comments on Hydraulic Fracturing 11/30/2011

VELMANETTE MONTGOMERY December 13, 2011

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I respectfully call on Governor Andrew Cuomo to maintain the ban on hydraulic fracturing throughout New York State.

When the Draft SGEIS was first circulated I strongly criticized the narrow scope and incomplete methodology which seemed designed to produce an outcome favorable to the energy industry. I criticized the bad science, the exclusion of thorough analysis under the cloak of “proprietary business secrets”, the race to completion and approval. With the release of the completed SGEIS I see that my concerns were well founded, and the assurances being offered are based on empty air. But even that air is cleaner than what we are likely to be breathing if hydrofracking is allowed to commence. Already the air is thick with the fog of the unknown.

What are these chemicals being used? How do they react in combination with each other, and with any substances they may encounter below the surface? Or with water and other liquids? What are the effects of the wastewater? Or the gasses burned off as part of the process? What effect will they have, in combination with other pollutants? How will they spread? What will be the effect on our crops? Or our animals? Or our children? Why is there a suspect correlation in the increase in earthquakes in hydrofracking areas? What is really going on down there? Why has this not been independently studied by the State of New York, who has been reliant upon the studies sponsored or provided by the very industry we are meant to regulate?

What we don't know CAN hurt us. It can kill us. It can give us cancer, and require the expense of trillions of public dollars for water filtration systems, and make us suffer the incalculable loss of both forest and farmland, of our entire agricultural industry, and a general decline in public well being.

We have a moral obligation. We are the guardians of the environment, its stewards, not its masters. This world was not put here for us to exploit but for us to nurture. We hold a trust not just for ourselves and our neighbors but for our children, our grandchildren, and all the generations who will follow.

And we have a financial obligation. Hydrofracking is the poster child for "Penny wise, pound foolish." The energy industry has an abysmal record of land restoration. There are no records of oil, coal, or gas mining areas that have been left improved by their use. We need only look to the history of areas that have been ruined in the name of industry, and the list is tragically long. This road is one way, and the long term destination is bleak. And completely unnecessary! Yes, we need industry, and energy, but there are cleaner, renewable alternatives that are not being considered! This industry is a bandage that will leave a gaping wound in our future.

Why are we willing to risk the sacrifice of the health and environment of generations of New Yorkers for the short term benefit of a tiny number of residents, and the usual suspects of international energy finance. And their lawyers, of course.

New York State has a history of environments ravaged by industry, from the open dumping of acids and metals into our rivers during the early industrial days to our more recent regrets with PCBs and other waste products. In my district I have a Superfund site that I am happy to report is going to be thoroughly restored, but I would be happier if the pollution had never occurred. Have we learned nothing? Are we going to repeat these mistakes for the short term profit of a few?

For these reasons and many, many more, I again respectfully call upon Governor Andrew Cuomo to ban hydraulic fracturing from the State of New York until credible answers can be made to these many questions, and credible assurances made for the health and future prosperity of our New York State.

Thank you for your consideration.

Senator Velmanette Montgomery

18th Senate District