

# Northern Westchester Watershed Coalition

February 9, 2010

Commissioner Alexander Grannis  
NYS DEC  
625 Broadway – 14<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Albany NY 12233-1011

Dear Commissioner Grannis,

It is our understanding that NYSDEC plans to issue a Draft Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement on the impact of expanded natural gas drilling in New York State. The Northern Westchester Watershed Coalition (NWWC) is extremely concerned about the impact that proposed natural gas drilling will have on the water supply. Approximately 85% of Westchester County obtains its water supply from the NYCDEP Catskill and Delaware water supply systems. Virtually all of the watersheds for these systems lie directly over the Marcellus Shale formation, where proposed natural gas drilling would occur. It is our understanding that the proposed natural gas drilling and hydro-fracturing operations require the clear cutting of forest, construction of new roads and drilling pads, and the storage and use of chemicals that can include numerous carcinogens. In addition, drilling and fracturing with pressurized solution can damage aqueducts and other subsurface facilities, cause settling and contaminate groundwater.

The NWWC fully supports and reiterates NYCDEP's concerns regarding the potential impact of the proposed drilling operations. Because New York City has an unfiltered system serving nine million customers, the potential for contamination is especially alarming. Deterioration in NYCDEP source water quality can quite possibly have a \$10 billion dollar impact to NYC and Westchester County due to the potential loss of NYCDEP's filtration avoidance status. In addition to potentially necessitating filtration, the proposed drilling may create pollution from dissolved chemicals, which are not removed by conventional filtration. The potential devastation of watershed lands, likely release of carcinogens and other contaminants into the watershed, and potential structural impact on NYC water supply infrastructure necessitate a thorough review of this proposed action,

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The NWWC urges NYSDEC to request a review of the potential health impact of natural gas drilling the State Department of Health, the primary regulator of drinking water standards in New York, and to strongly consider the potential permanent deterioration of the water supply to NYC and the majority of Westchester County when formulating NYSDEC's natural gas drilling.

As future customers of the NYCDEP Catskill Delaware aqueduct water supply, we urge you to do everything in your power to prevent the degradation of this precious natural resource.

Very truly yours,

Mary Beth Murphy  
Supervisor, Town of Somers  
Chair, NWWC

C: NWWC Communities

MBM/bjs

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