

Support for a Health Impact Assessment in NYS budget

March 16, 2012

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Senate Majority Leader Dean Skelos
Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver

Dear Governor Cuomo, Senate Majority Leader Skelos, and Speaker Silver,

As you negotiate the budget, we urge you to include a Health Impact Assessment on gas exploration and production using high-volume, slick water, horizontal hydraulic fracturing in the New York State 2012-2013 budget. The New York State Assembly included such a health impact assessment in their 2012-2013 budget resolution.

The medical community across New York has become increasingly concerned about the health impacts of hydraulic fracturing. Throughout the country health impacts ranging from loss of smell, memory problems, and headaches to a number of serious respiratory illnesses and cancers have been associated with high-volume, slick water, horizontal hydraulic fracturing. In October 2011, 250 physicians and medical professionals joined together in calling for a comprehensive public health impact assessment <http://www.psehealthyenergy.org/resources/view/198813>. On December 10, 2011 Dr. Sandra Steingraber, Lois Gibbs and Fran Drescher echoed that call with nineteen NY-based cancer advocacy groups in a letter asking for the same assessment <http://www.psehealthyenergy.org/resources/view/198831>.

Experts in the federal government are also asking that more research be done on the health impacts of fracking, including Christopher Portier, the Director of the National Center for Environmental Health at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, Georgia. As one of the most respected researchers on health issues, Portier stated, "More research is needed for us to understand public health impacts from natural gas drilling and new gas drilling technologies." To go forward in New York without a proper health impact assessment is therefore unacceptable. We respectfully request that an appropriation be made for this study.

Sincerely,

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