



MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT
S.4046 (Carlucci)

An ACT in relation to high volume horizontal hydraulic fracturing.

Summary of Legislation

This bill would prevent the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) from finalizing the environmental review process for shale gas extraction using high volume horizontal hydraulic fracturing (HVHF) in New York until: 1) at least 24 months have passed or the Commissioner of Health determines that he has sufficient health data for making a recommendation to DEC regarding HVHF and 2) the completion of two current health studies evaluating the public health effects of HVHF.

Statement in Support

HVHF poses major public health risks that are still being evaluated. DEC has asked the Department of Health to review the treatment of health impacts in its Revised Draft Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement. While this is a step in the right direction, it will not provide for the comprehensive evaluation of public health risks that is necessary for the State to make an informed decision on whether to permit HVHF within its borders. This bill would ensure this evaluation takes place by allotting time for the completion of studies currently examining the health impacts of HVHF before DEC finalizes the environmental review process.

The facts regarding HVHF's environmental impacts are clear. HVHF causes emissions of a number of harmful pollutants into the air we breathe, including volatile organic compounds (VOCs), methane, and hazardous air pollutants such as benzene, a known carcinogen. VOCs emitted into the air contain a number of chemicals that can be harmful to human health and cause the formation of ground-level ozone. HVHF also carries the risk of ground and drinking water contamination from poor well construction, spills, and improper disposal of fracking wastewater, among other causes. We also know that in states that have pushed ahead with HVHF, residents living near shale gas operations have reported health issues ranging from dizziness, sinus disorders, bronchitis and other respiratory symptoms to nausea, fatigue, headaches, difficulty concentrating, and cancer. In a study conducted by the Colorado School of Public Health, researchers found that residents living less than half a mile from oil and gas wells face cancer risks that are 66 percent higher than those living farther away.

The New York legislature has the unique opportunity to postpone HVHF in the State until critical public health data is completed, evaluated, and fully understood. This bill would provide the State with crucial time to ensure that the health of New Yorkers is put first and that a decision on whether to allow HVHF is not made until the science is in.

Riverkeeper strongly supports this legislation.

www.riverkeeper.org · 78 North Broadway, E-House · White Plains, NY 10603 · t 914-422-4410 · f 914-422-4437