



Howie Hawkins - Green for Governor Ban Hydrofracking

Howie Hawkins and the Green Party support a statewide ban on hydrofracking for natural gas.

We must immediately focus our energy policy and investments on the rapid transition to a safe, clean energy system based on conservation, efficiency and renewables. As the BP oil disaster in the Gulf of Mexico reminds us, “Drill, Baby, Drill” inevitably means “Spill, Baby, Spill.” Using hydraulic fracturing of rock formations in gas drilling results in the contamination of water, air and soil. And accidents inevitably happen, which result in major spills that can extend contamination far from the well site, with the taxpayers often footing the bill.

The state’s Southern Tier, the Susquehanna and Upper Delaware river basins, and the Catskill Mountains are the source of drinking water for about 14 million New Yorkers.

The Risks of Hydrofracking

Hydrofracking means injecting toxic-laden fresh water and sand at extremely high pressure into rock layers to shatter the stone and release the gas. Each frack injects 2 to 9 million gallons of water with 20,000 to 90,000 gallons of toxic chemicals. Where it has been done in Texas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania — in fact, in over 30 states — hydrofracking has generated immense environmental problems, including:

- **Pollution:** Contaminated drinking water aquifers and wells, reservoirs, lakes and streams.
– Toxic waste ponds full of the waste fluids that come back up the wellbore; there could be up to 40,000 of these ponds across the New York State if full-scale fracking is permitted.
- **Accidents:** Well blowouts, fires and explosions; Drilling fluid waste pond leaks and spills
- **Property Damage** Natural gas can seep into water systems and homes to pollute kitchen faucet water so it can be lit on fire, and cause houses and drinking water wells to explode. Banks often won’t provide mortgages for property with leases for fracking.
- **Disease.** Residents of drilling areas can become chronically ill due to the seepage of carcinogens and neurotoxins into the air, water and soil. Repeated or prolonged exposure can cause liver, heart, blood and brain damage as well as leukemia and other cancers.

With a failure rate between 2 and 8 percent, hydrofracking poses an unacceptable risk to NYS’s abundant water supplies, a natural resource that sustains our communities and is the state’s most important natural resource base for sustainable economic development in the agriculture, manufacturing and tourism sectors.

Natural Gas is NOT a Bridge to a Renewable Energy System. Natural gas is not “clean” energy but rather another polluting, non-renewable fossil fuel that releases greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. Hydrofracking will almost certainly destroy more jobs than it creates. The gas and oil industry is about 10 times more capital intensive than the US economy as a whole.

A moratorium at best buys us time to organize. DEC and EPA, under industry pressure, are likely to recommend regulations for “safe” hydrofracking, not a ban. We must demand a ban.

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