

To: Edward Hanlon/DC/USEPA/US@EPA
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Subject: hydrofracking NY State

I moved to the Sullivan County Catskills from New York City in 1997. I fell in love with the land and communities and now it is my obligation to protect and preserve the places that enchanted me in the first place.

Although it is my view that powerful multinational corporations may be making it nearly impossible to halt the fracking process, it is possible for you to ensure that greater scrutiny and oversight are guaranteed.

The fracking process cannot be accomplished short of blasting poison into our ground water to extract profits. While a few multinational corporations may achieve their profit goals, the costs will entail the complete destruction and devastation of our communities, our environment and our aquifer.

Gas drilling (fracking) in the Catskills is an industrial activity that will alter the lives of the citizens who live above the Marcellus Shale deposits and those entire down stream and down wind of that area. As a result of the 2005 Energy Policy Act, hydraulic fracturing was exempted from most federal environmental regulations such as the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Safe Drinking Water Act, Emergency Planning and Community Right To Know Act, National Resource Recovery Act, even the Super Fund Act. That decision which did not entail a thorough study of unintended consequences should be immediately overturned.

Large areas of New York State overlie the Marcellus shale formation including the Southern Tier, the Catskill/Delaware Watershed and the Upper Delaware River Basin. These areas have resources that are absolutely crucial to the health and welfare of our state, including potable water for New York City, Philadelphia and New Jersey. Gas drilling is an incompatible industrial activity guaranteed to turn our beautiful upstate landscape into an uninhabitable radioactive industrial zone.

I am a full time resident of Sullivan County, New York. I grow chemical free commercial flowers on my 60 acre property. I also am a potter and have a clothing business. I have created a life and a business for myself. I depend on the tourist trade to make my living. I can assure you that if you allow the hydraulic fracturing of our land (the land we have been caring for) the tourism trade will disappear, real estate values will plummet and Sullivan County's two largest industries, agriculture and tourism, will be decimated.

I have lived here long enough to have witnessed many floods and can attest to the fact that the water flows down my hill from my uphill neighbor (who is threatening to sign a gas lease) onto my property, into my basement and pond, then flows downward to my neighbors below, runs a few meters further into the creek, wending its way to the Delaware River. All of this land is a watershed- intertwined by nature not property lines.

I implore-demand-plead-do not enable the poisoning of our potable water. A careful study of the floods of the past five years will demonstrate that mountains have already washed away together with soundly built structures, the lives of our citizens and animals. Because natural flooding can happen anywhere, plateaus, valleys, hills or mountains, man-made hydraulic fracking must be banned in all known and susceptible flood plains essential to groundwater recharge.

Degradation of our streams will lead to the degradation of watershed areas which in turn will lead to pollution of water depended upon by millions of citizens. We all learned this in science 101. When I moved to Callicoon Center it was for the rest of my life – I do not want to be forced to, nor can I afford to change my plans as a consequence of something completely preventable and man-made. Our area could become another Chernobyl - a disaster in the making that can be stopped. Only you have the power and the authority to prevent this predictable consequence.

Hydraulic fracking is not an acceptable way to extract gas from the earth. It is far too dangerous of a threat to public health from contamination of our water supply. Hydraulic fracturing gas drilling is intrinsically contaminating because the drilling process requires the injection of millions of gallons of fresh water mixed with dangerously toxic chemicals into the ground, which are able to infiltrate groundwater and aquifers. In the concentrated area of the NYC Watershed alone, more than ten million people depend on this single source of water, as well as the millions of others downstream along the Delaware River.

It is necessary for you, The Environmental Protection Agency, to implement and enforce stringent safety protocols. You have a very difficult and extremely important job to do: our lives depend on it.

The time for civility on this matter has run its course; I and many others now demand the following:

- * A cumulative impact requirement that includes a comprehensive and enforceable waste water plan that takes into consideration our state's aging and inadequate waste water capabilities.
- * A plan must be that ensures that local officials have the staffing and training to monitor and respond to accidents and emergencies.
- * A thorough and comprehensive study of the cumulative impacts on the entire Marcellus Shale including lands within the blue line of the Catskill Park and the New York City Watershed must be done.
- * Regulations requiring gas companies to be fully responsible and accountable for accidents and environmental damages.
- * Adequate provisions that protect us from the depletion of our local water supply by the drilling companies.
- * The necessary protection of our roads and personal land from excessive truck traffic, toxic and radioactive loads, open pit capture ponds and multistory rigs.
- * Health impact assessments and water resources (well & spring) assessments and monitoring on an individual homestead basis: pre-fracking, fracking and post-fracking

It is unacceptable to me that New York State and the DEC and the Federal Government would allow multinational corporate gas interests to "experiment" on the health of its citizens to balance a budget or promote job growth. The laundry list of accidents and toxic dumping by the gas industry are long. The science is evident that contradicts the gas companies claims of safety. We are not laboratory rats nor are we expendable. We pay taxes and we are your citizenry.

Any final set of "rules" must not be mere suggestions or recommendations -- they must carry the weight of law. You must protect us; it is your sworn duty. You owe your fealty to the citizens of The United States and our safety and well-being is your responsibility. You do not owe the greedy speculators one cent nor a whisper or whisker of loyalty.

If fracking is approved it will be followed by refineries on the coast of Long Island. these have been proposed in the past - but will become essential to refine the "sour gas" that may come out of the fracking process. One bad decision will lead to many more.

There is no need to rush into a situation that will permanently alter our lives and our environment. I am sure this poisonous and radioactive method of gas extraction is not only regressive and unnecessary but it will also have dire and devastating consequences. Hydraulic fracking in its current form should be banned completely, simply said it is not safe.

You must understand- my water is your water. If you poison me now, you will not be far behind.

Jill Wiener
Earthgirl Pottery