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Fracking opponents celebrate, turn to Paterson

Tuesday, November 30, 2010 at 4:56 PM by [Casey Seiler](#), Capitol bureau chief in [Environment](#), [General](#)

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Environmental activists and their allies in the Assembly held a news conference to praise last night's Assembly passage of the moratorium on new natural gas wells statewide. Now on Gov. David Paterson's desk, the measure runs through May 15 and covers the controversial hydrofracking method as well as the more conventional vertical drilling technique.

Not surprising considering the length of the debate and the possible environmental/economic impacts of hydrofracking, each side was describing the ban as — depending on who you talk to — a major common-sense victory for environmentalists or a job-killing piece of politicized hysteria.

Paterson, however, described it as "really not that big a deal" in a Tuesday-morning radio interview with Susan Arbetter of the "Capitol Pressroom."

He acknowledged that the DEC's work on the draft regulations wouldn't be completed by the end of his administration — and possibly not even by the end date of the moratorium.

Paterson said he hadn't known that the Assembly was going to take up the ban. "We're going to review where we think we are in the process," he said.

Outside the Assembly chamber a few hours later, the moratorium sponsor Assemblyman Bob Sweeney, D-Lindenhurst, said he was surprised by the grassroots support he received from every area of the state.

Sweeney said he hadn't yet received an indication from Paterson's office of what the governor might do.

He said that he had no regrets about including vertical drilling as well as hydrofracking in the moratorium — a major grievance of the natural gas industry — but said there was good reason for that aspect of the measure. "We have seen problems in New York State as well as wells in Pennsylvania," he said, referring to the widespread environmental **problems** in and around Dimock, Pa. Sweeney noted that vertical drilling was being examined by the same EPA study that is currently examining hydrofracking.

"We're not talking about a ban; we're talking about a little time to take a look at everything and see if this is where we want to be," he said.

Also on hand to mark the occasion were Assembly members Brian Kavanagh, D-Manhattan, and Barbara Lifton, D-Ithaca, plus representatives of Hudson Riverkeeper, the Natural Resources Defense Council, Environmental Advocates of New York, the National Wildlife Federation, the Sierra Club and more.

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Blago

November 30, 2010, 7:29 PM

Yay! Less jobs! More expensive energy! Less consumer purchasing power!

Awesome! Go hydrofracking opponents!

Upstate Irate

December 1, 2010, 7:25 AM

"He acknowledged that the DEC's work on the draft regulations wouldn't be completed by the end of his administration — and possibly not even by the end date of the moratorium."

You can't keep cutting DEC staff and continue to add more services at the same time.

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