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## Gas drilling committee mulls taking drill cuttings

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**Bath Courier**

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Bath, NY — A proposal for the Steuben County landfill to accept drill cuttings from Marcellus Shale natural gas wells in Pennsylvania was under close scrutiny Wednesday.

An overview of a study on potential radioactivity of the rock and soil was presented to the county Legislature's Public Works Committee, with nearly a dozen drilling activists objecting to the landfill proposal.

"The subject is too complex," said Susan Multer, president of the Steuben County League of Women Voters and a member of People for a Healthy Environment. "Too many things have gone wrong."

For nearly a year, the Public Works Committee has been considering a plan to accept drill cuttings from the well bores, removed before the well is hydraulically fractured, or "fracked," to stimulate the flow of gas from the shale.

The debris hauled to the landfill would not be waste material produced by the controversial fracking process, Public Works Commissioner Vincent Spagnoletti told the committee during his summary of the study.

However, scientists and environmentalists say the drill cuttings themselves contain radioactive materials long buried deep underground.

Spagnoletti said the study showed radiation levels in the rock and soil were far below federal standards for dangerous emissions. The study also showed handling the cuttings posed no danger for landfill workers, he said.

But the study was criticized by residents during a public comment period held before Spagnoletti's report.

Residents said the study was biased because Casella manages landfills in Chemung and Allegany counties, along with the private Hakes landfill in Erwin, and now accepts drill cuttings at those landfills.

However, Scott Foti, a representative of the state Department of Environmental Conservation, said firms typically for environmental studies. The private studies are then carefully reviewed by the DEC, he said.

The DEC took samples which confirmed the Casella study, Foti said.

Foti also said the DEC would welcome a privately paid, independent test of the cuttings.

Multer and other residents urged the Public Works Committee to meet with experts on toxic waste and radioactivity before any decision on accepting the debris at the landfill was made.

"Technology falls behind the need," said Jean Wosinski of Corning. "They are operating under an immature science ... this is an extremely dangerous process."

Rachel Treichler of Hammondsport, president of the Environmental Management Council, told the committee state regulations regarding disposal of drilling waste are outdated and inadequate. The council meets with Spagnoletti tonight.

Pulteney Town Supervisor Bill Weber said the landfill proposal should not be confused with the issue of waste created by the fracking process.

"The fear is overblown," Weber said.

Spagnoletti asked the committee to review the complete study.

No date has been set for a final decision.

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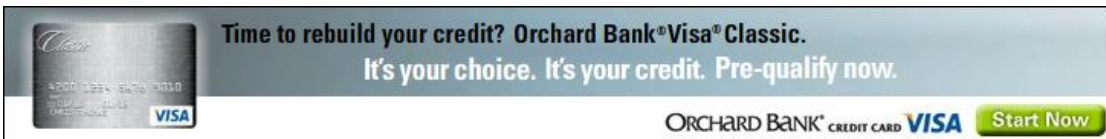
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