

DEC: Hydrofracking report to be released Wednesday



Written by

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ALBANY -- The state on Wednesday will release its latest report on hydraulic fracturing, though the length of a public comment period on the document is still up in the air, the state's top environmental regulator said Friday.

Joseph Martens, commissioner of the Department of Environmental Conservation, said his office would announce the length of the comment period when it releases the 1,000-plus page document next week.

The DEC had previously said the draft report on the controversial hydrofracking process, which uses **water** and chemicals to break underground shale formations and unlock natural gas, would be released in late August.

A preliminary draft was released in July, but the state was waiting to incorporate an outside report on the community impacts of hydrofracking into its review before beginning a comment period.

The comment period was originally slated for 60 days, but conservation groups have pressured the department to triple the length.

"We're considering all of the comments we've gotten about extending it or shortening it," Martens said. "And we're busy now about getting the document out as we said we would on Aug. 31."

Gov. Andrew Cuomo, however, said Thursday he wasn't keen on the idea of extending the timeframe. Cuomo tapped Martens to head the DEC earlier this year.

"I've heard no reason why the comment period isn't adequate as it is now," Cuomo said.

High-volume hydrofracking remains on hold in New York until the DEC's review is complete, which is expected at some point next year.

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