

Local News

Libous: State needs ‘measured policy’ for gas drilling

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State Sen. Tom Libous, R-Binghamton, recently stated that New York state needs a “measured policy” when it comes to allowing natural gas drilling companies to begin operations within the Empire State’s portion of the Marcellus Shale.

“For months now, we as a community have been debating the merits — and risks — of drilling in the Marcellus Shale area,” he said. “Billions of dollars invested in the community over time, potential for great environmental disaster. And I’ve been reading the reports, listening to both sides and trying to find the best solution. And I do believe there is one.”

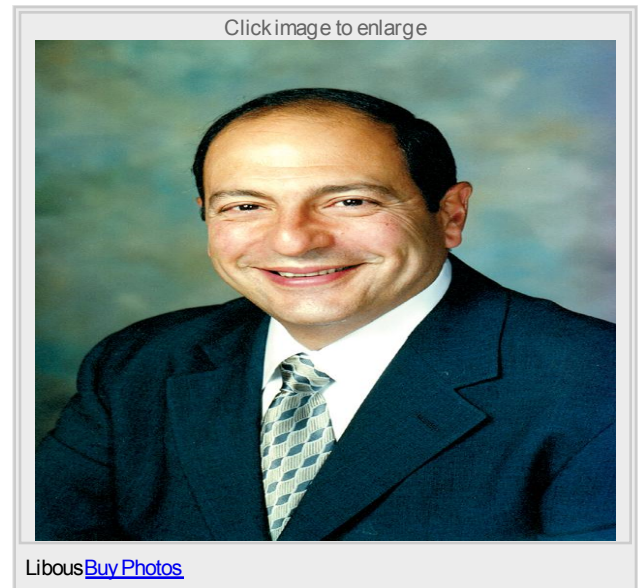
“It would be easy to say ‘Drill baby, drill!’ But I won’t. It would be easy to say ‘Never drill!’ I won’t do that, either,” Libous continued. “We need a measured policy, not what Sen. Joe Addabbo is suggesting in a bill — delay drilling needlessly, for 120 days.”

Libous stated that it appears that the intent behind this proposal is to “just add delay after delay until upstate New York gets left behind in the economy — again.”

“Sen. Addabbo doesn’t have to worry about drilling, either way,” said Libous. “His district is in Queens, and about the largest space available is the Aqueduct Racetrack. I don’t think that’s a candidate for a natural gas well.”

Libous said his intended policy is the state shouldn’t delay future drilling, but should use caution when allowing this practice.

“I support drilling,” he said. “Smart drilling. Drilling that minimizes risk, and maximizes benefit. Take the recent news report about gas drilling truck traffic damaging Pennsylvania roads. I said long ago that we had to watch out what the added traffic could do to our roads. Now we have proof. But we can ease the problems caused on road traffic with appropriate regulation.”



The hydrofracking procedure used in extracting natural gas from the Marcellus Shale is not without risk, but many of the worst dangers can be eased with good rules and oversight, said Libous.

"In fact, I worked hard to get the department of environmental conservation the funding it needs to maintain our safety," he said. "Yes, I'm looking forward to the benefits that can come from drilling, and I'm concerned about the potential costs in health and quality of life. That's why I want so badly to see the state's proposed regulations."

"But I work on this theory — most, if not all, the dangers that drilling presents can be eased, or even eliminated, by making sure that we're all educated — property owners, municipalities and the state itself," he added.

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