

More than 200 show up for forum on drill cuttings

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Corning Leader

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Bath, N.Y. — More than 200 residents crowded the Bath Volunteer Fire Hall Monday as both sides weighed in on whether the Steuben County landfill should accept Marcellus Shale cuttings from Pennsylvania.

Cuttings are rocks and debris removed to install drill casings into the Marcellus Shale. Sludge and contaminated water left by “hydrofracking” the shale to release natural gas will not be accepted at the county landfill, located on Turnpike Road.

County Public Works Commissioner Vince Spagnoletti said the county’s decision to accept cuttings and “some lubricant” was made after studies showed the debris tested well below federal and state guidelines for safe radiation levels.

However, Marvin Resnikoff, physicist and senior associate at Radioactive Management Associates, said the county looked at tests that were not sensitive enough for some radioactive elements.

Resnikoff said federal safe levels were lower than the 50 “picocuries” standard the county will use to accept cuttings. He said 15 picocuries is considered safe. A picocurie is a measurement of radioactivity.

Resnikoff warned the county needed to be sure any cuttings were not contaminated by continued use of radioactive water, which could raise the level from current tested levels of 2 picocuries.

Brine has been measured as much as 25 times higher than federal standards, Resnikoff said.

The county will not accept brine, which contains high salt content and other chemicals, and is used to break apart shale and release natural gas. The salty fluid must be treated at special leachate treatment plants.

Resnikoff urged the county to conduct spot checks and closely monitor the cuttings as they are brought in.

Both spot checks and monitoring are part of the procedures the county is now considering, Spagnoletti said. Spagnoletti said he also has provided local environmentalists with information about the monitors and procedures.

A number of residents had questions after an hour-long presentation with one man questioning whether the state Department of Environmental Conservation has the resources to check landfill safety.

A woman asked if it was “morally right” to support the drilling in neighboring Pennsylvania. She charged the drilling has destroyed the beauty of the state and said she worried this area will be destroyed, too.

“I worry about that, too,” Spagnoletti said. “We just have to make sure it’s safe.”

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kidsgoneglobal

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It is very sad to read that Steuben County is still sound asleep. As others around the world are actively fighting hydro-fracking and successfully banning its use, we in Steuben County are willing accomplices to its cancerous growth at home. Have we lost all common sense?

dmbfantony
6 hours ago
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Let's hope that momentary economic problems don't prevail over the future generations that should inhabit and enjoy the natural beauties of Steuben County.

batmani24
2 hours ago
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kidsgoneglobal, there is only a small vocal minority that fight fracking and they are being funded and instigated by; OPEC, oil companies, refiners, coal companies, air pollution abatement companies. You are doing their dirty work, because they know that gas is cleaner and more economical.

It is obvious that you have not looked at both sides of the coin, fracking is extremely safe and the technology of recycling, fracking without chemicals and other methods are being advanced even farther.

DMBFANTONY, do you realize how many thousands of wells have been drilled in this area in the past. You don't even know they are there. These new wells will go the same way and in the mean time create bio-diversity. Stop trying to scare the people.
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