

## State must be clear on gas drilling

10:29 PM, May. 23, 2011|

As state leaders grapple with whether to permit a controversial drilling process to extract natural gas from far below the surface, they must make one thing abundantly clear: If allowed, companies involved in the technique known as hydrofracking are going to have to fully disclose what chemicals would be used in the process.

The state, in fact, shouldn't miss any opportunity to make this point clearly and definitively. Earlier this year, the state Senate's Environmental Conservation Committee unconscionably punted the issue, and the public must insist on more vigilance going forward.

A bill by Sen. Liz Krueger, D-Manhattan, would have required the state Department of Environmental Conservation to make companies disclose the fluids used in hydraulic fracturing — and to prohibit fluids that pose a health risk to the public. But that bill was defeated largely along political party lines, with Republicans rejecting the measure, meaning the matter won't get considered on the Senate floor.

Critics of the bill argue it wasn't necessary because the state Department of Environmental Conservation is still reviewing the matters related to hydrofracking.

Yet, as is, the DEC lists more than 200 chemicals that can potentially be used in the hydrofracking process. That number should be lowered as the result of the review, and companies should have to provide specific information — that is the list of chemicals — involved in each process.

State leaders should be insisting on this. Tapping this country's abundant sources of natural gas would make the United States more energy independent, but drilling also could have a detrimental impact on water supplies if not handled properly. The primary area of concern involves the Marcellus Shale, which runs through the state's Southern Tier, Catskills and central New York regions.

In fact, other areas of the country that have allowed hydrofracking are now waking up to the facts. Texas, for instance, is about to become the first state to require natural gas drillers to disclose the chemicals they use in the extraction process. Texas already has almost 100,000 horizontally

Advertisement



**Protect Your Home  
with ADT!**

**Click Here  
to Learn More!**

ADT AUTHORIZED DEALER

Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™



fracked wells but has recently seen several lawsuits arguing that hydraulic fracturing in its Barnett Shale has caused significant groundwater contamination. Rep. James Keffer, the Republican chairman of the Texas House Energy Committee, oversaw passage of the bill through the House of Representatives; he became convinced that fracking fears had to be addressed, The Associated Press has reported.

Hydrofracking in Pennsylvania also has been blamed for contamination of water wells and rivers in that state.

New York legislators have every right and obligation to protect the water supplies of New York state — and to force full disclosure by companies that are doing things that could hurt those supplies. Once DEC releases its report, state lawmakers will have a chance to weigh in again. It's imperative they get this right before any permits are issued.

Advertisement

An advertisement for ADT security services. The top half features the text "Protect Your Home with ADT!" in white serif font on a black background. Below this is a photograph of a person's silhouette in a dark room, looking towards a door with a mail slot. The bottom left corner contains the ADT logo and the text "AUTHORIZED DEALER". The bottom right corner features the text "Click Here to Learn More!" in white serif font.

**Protect Your Home  
with ADT!**

**ADT AUTHORIZED DEALER**

**Click Here  
to Learn More!**

Print Powered By FormatDynamics™