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## News:

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### Rep. Massa calls for revised study

By Rick Miller  
Olean Times Herald

Rep. Eric Massa said Tuesday the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation should start over on its draft Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement (dSGEIS) for drilling for natural gas in the Marcellus Shale formation.

The Corning Democrat joined other federal and state lawmakers and representatives from environmental groups in New York City on Monday calling on Gov. David Paterson to withdraw the dSGEIS and prepare a revised study to meet the requirements of the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA).

Rep. Massa said he strongly supports efforts to develop this country's abundant natural-gas supplies to reduce dependence on imported oil.

"But if the method by which you obtain that natural gas destroys your ability to put a water well in the ground, you shoot yourself in the foot," he said.

He added that he was not only concerned about the hundreds of millions of gallons of water that is used in hydrofracturing to open up the shale and release trapped natural gas, but the toxic chemicals added to the water that can make their way into the water table.

"The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, in their draft SGEIS failed to address these concerns," Rep. Massa said in a telephone press conference with 29th Congressional District reporters.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recently said the draft SGEIS "does not cut the mustard" in addressing these concerns, Rep. Massa said.

In comments to the DEC, the Environmental Protection Agency stated, "If gas drilling, however, adversely impacts water quality in the watershed, the city of New York would likely be required to build a filtration treatment system at an expenditure of \$10 billion in capital costs and \$100 million in annual operating costs. Clearly, it is in all our interests to avoid this scenario."

"Where do you get the water? When the water is extracted, where will it be processed?" Rep. Massa asked. "I want DEC to start over."

The congressman's comments come after New York City officials have asked for a moratorium on drilling in the Marcellus Shale formation in the city's watershed in the Catskill Mountains over concerns the groundwater could become contaminated.

To critics who call him a "tree hugger," Rep. Massa said, "Before I was a tree hugger, I was a water drinker." The state must "protect that (water) resource. If we can find a way to do this, absolutely, we want that natural gas."

The congressman said the horizontal hydrofracing process is exempted from meeting the regulations of the Clean Water Act, thanks to an amendment in the Energy Bill passed during the last year of the Bush administration.

Rep. Massa was also critical of the 12.5 percent royalty paid to owners of mineral rights in New York state.

"New York has one of the lowest royalty payments," he said.

In addition, the EPA has expressed concerns that the DEC has not considered the impact of hydrofracturing on the state's Indian nations.

"Representatives of virtually every Indian nation expressed serious opposition to hydrofracturing. Indian nation concerns include the radioactivity of cuttings and flowback materials, the fate of toxic/carcinogenic chemicals used in hydrofracturing solutions, the impact on water quality and supply, climate impacts and long-term sustainability," according to EPA comments filed with the state DEC on Dec. 30.

The comment period on the state DEC's dSGEIS on drilling in the Marcellus Shale formation ended Dec. 31.

(Contact reporter Rick Miller at [rmiller@oleantimesherald.com](mailto:rmiller@oleantimesherald.com))

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