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Businesses and Towns Taking On Fracking

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By Brennan Smith
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Town of Middlefield, NY (WBNG Binghamton) As state lawmakers try to decide what they want to do with hydraulic fracturing, some towns are taking the matter into their own hands.

The town of Otsego and Middlefield are discouraging drilling on their land.

One area business is working to ban fracking.

Brewery Ommegang operates in the Town of Middlefield.

It goes through one million gallons of water per year to make its beer.

Water, it believes, could become polluted if hydraulic fracturing were allowed in the town.

"Beer is water and any threat to our water quality is a threat to our business," said Brewmaster Phil Leinhar.

The Brewery says it is urging its local government to take action against hydro-fracking.

It is also taking a stand with 250 other businesses in a coalition.

"This isn't just the usual liberal, left-wing greeny thing. It's people across the entire spectrum. We're concerned about this as a business," says Larry Bennett who does Press Relations for the brewery.

Environmental effects isn't the business's only concern.

The nearby Cooperstown Chamber of Commerce says its members rely heavily on tourism.

It released a statement against fracking after surveying its members.

Eighty-seven percent of its members who responded agree with the move.

The chamber believes the drilling industry would change the region and discourage travel.

"I think the area sees half a million visitors per year. This year, we'll get forty-thousand coming to this brewery right here and that makes it important to us to have a pristine

environment, not just the water."

The Brewery says it doesn't want New York State to be the testing ground for natural gas drilling.

It wants the DEC to continue to research the procedure before it approves it.

Bennett says he will be meeting with the DEC and state leaders tomorrow.

He will be sharing his own research with them and finding out where they stand on the issue.

The Towns of Otsego and Middlefield are looking into either rezoning or crafting bans to prevent drilling.