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Hydrofracking discussion draws differing opinions

By Brian Quinn
Daily Reporter

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FILLMORE — The crowd of at least 40 listened as Bob Ciesielski shared the Sierra Club's concern about hydrofracking. Some said they agreed with him while others said he was trying to frighten people.

Ciesielski's message seemed to be that the Marcellus Shale area, a rock formation 6,000 to 8,000 feet beneath Pennsylvania, New York, West Virginia and Ohio, needs to be protected from hydraulic fracturing, or hydrofracking. During hydrofracking, a driller injects vast amounts of water, along with sand and chemicals, underground to break up the shale and release the gas. Hydrofracking means injecting millions of gallons of water, along with sand and chemical additives, into wells to separate the rock and allow the gas to flow out. The millions of gallons of contaminated water produced have to be removed. While fracking has been around for decades, Ciesielski said, hydrofracking began in the last few years, with Haliburton being involved in its development.

"Much of this contamination comes from naturally-occurring chlorides, heavy metals and radioactivity previously locked in the shale," according to information Ciesielski handed out Wednesday.

"We're asking that this type of drilling procedure be reviewed," Ciesielski said. He noted the state Senate passed a moratorium on new hydrofracking permits until May 15, to allow time for regulations to be researched. The Sierra Club is urging the Assembly to pass a companion bill.

"This obviously is being fought by the industry, which says ... 'We don't need this type of protection,'" he said.

Ciesielski said in Dimrock, Pa., nine private drinking water wells recently became contaminated due to Marcellus Shale drilling. He said people have signed leases and later found problems with their property because of the drilling.

"Companies know even if they pay hundreds of thousands of dollars for lease rights, they're going to be making millions," Ciesielski said.

Norman Ungermann Jr. of Cuba said he felt Ciesielski was trying to scare the public with the stories of contamination of people's wells.

"I understand your concern here and I'm not saying it never happens, because it probably does on occasion," Ungermann said.

Roger Hinz of Fillmore, who lives and works on a farm with his son, Bruce, said he agreed that Ciesielski's presentation was scaring people and turning them against hydrofracking.

Outside after leaving the meeting, Roger Hinz said drilling a company called Petroleum Development Corporation drilled for gas at their farm about two years ago.

"We were treated excellently. They left our real estate better than when they came in."

The Hinzs said any wells drilled were capped. They also said haven't seen any problems with their farm, although Bruce Hinz added, "We don't know what chemicals they used."

Sandra Sheldon of Caneadea said part of her concern is with the media and available information. She says there are no investigative media in the county to look at both sides of the issue.

Sheldon said the county's top assets are its land and its water.

"I keep seeing the threat to those two things and I don't see a united citizenship to protect those two things," she said. "I don't trust the EPA and I really don't trust the DEC to watch my back or anything."

Nora Urena-Cowell of Centerville said hydrofracking is happening right now in the state. She said she has a relative in Eden who's been a victim of natural gas drillers.

"They hydrofracked her well and now her land is useless," Urena-Cowell said.

"I'm here because I really don't think this is a scare tactic," she said of Ciesielski's presentation. "I think one of the most important reasons I came here was to outreach with each other. What kind of a group can we get together to attack what's at the forefront? That's hydrofracking."

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I tried to convince my wife on the benefits of Hydrofracking. Actually I probably should just stop right there. Typically I'd go on some crazy offensive double entendre loaded comment but I'm trying to be a wee bit more mature. And let's just say that regardless of the form of drilling you are involved in it's best to get the consent of any concerned party and leave it at that.

midnight rambler

12 hours ago

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Hats off to the Sierra Club for balancing this whole issue out, and counterpointing all the propaganda that is being put out their by the Oil and Gas producers!
I am proud to be a member of this fine National and local group.
You can find out plenty more about trouble with Fracking and drilling by going to the Olean Times Herald archives and searching for the many many horror stories about huge problems with the drilling experiences the Pennsylvania folks have had to deal with.

And remember, you dont have to go any further than just walk through the woods in the southern part of this county, to see the horrible results of the last drilling efforts that our oil and gas friends have left us with. Uncapped wells by the thousands still are all over our lands here.
TMT
48 minutes ago
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Here we go again.. We need to come up to the 21rst century people... Remember that Allegany county is the poorest in the state of New York This is the ultimate chance to change that condition and put us on the map. It is bad enough that we face so many mandates and we have to deal with the EPA, the DEC,our wonderful governor and all the idiots in Albany not to mention our local legeslators that use our transfer stations as a way to create and generate more taxes for all of us. We need to concentrate on issues like that rather than hydrofracking for natural gas.These informational demonstrations only hold up and keep our economy at the lowest level possible. Let's look at our neighboring State to the south.They are drilling now (as we sit and argue and hold anti ---negative meetings.) The farmers involved are now rich and it is employing hundreds - if not thousands of people.. ' Hello New York State....."
stonewall
45 minutes ago
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I commend all those that are trying to save us from the Oil and Gas Industry. I would also hope that all of you would come together and boycott the industry by walking, riding a horse, riding a bike to work, school or any other place you would need to go. It would also be great exercise for you to cut wood to burn during the winter so you could punish the oil and gas industry. You all use gas and oil every day. If we just all had windmills in all the front yards. Of course you apparently love to pay taxes. While our friends in PA reap the economic rewards of the gas boom there, we in New York continue to pay and pay and pay.

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