

DON'T FRACK WITH NEW YORK'S WATER

Now is the time to make a difference in the debate on fracking by commenting on New York State's draft environmental review and proposed regulations. These will determine where and how companies would be permitted to drill for natural gas using horizontal hydraulic fracturing – “fracking.” Riverkeeper has identified significant problems with the state's environmental impact report and proposed regulations and will file a detailed response designed to protect our water quality and our quality of life for future generations. Do your part. **Comment by Dec. 12.**

What is Fracking?

Horizontal hydraulic fracturing is a technique used to access natural gas locked in rock formations like the Marcellus Shale that underlies much of the New York's Southern Tier and the Catskills, including a major portion of the watershed lands that supply drinking water to New York City and much of the Hudson Valley. Companies inject a mixture of chemicals, water and sand underground to “fracture” tight shale formations and unlock previously inaccessible natural gas held there.

How can Fracking damage the environment?

Fracking is a major industrial activity that has the potential to cause environmental damage in many significant ways, from clear cutting well pads and access roads, to injecting chemicals into the ground and releasing contaminants along with natural gas, to creating hazardous air pollution and waste for which there is no clear disposal plan. Fracking also disrupts and degrades local communities, requiring the use of trucks and other heavy equipment incompatible with local roads and landscapes.

What is wrong with New York's fracking plan?

The Department of Environmental Conservation is responsible for fully evaluating fracking's potential impacts to public health and the environment, but its draft environmental impact statement and proposed regulations are biased in favor of gas drillers. The plans have a number of major flaws, including the DEC's failure to:

- **Fully protect New York City's watershed.** The state's buffer is still vulnerable to horizontal and lower-water volume fracking, wastewater disposal, truck traffic and water withdrawals.
- **Protect principle aquifers and private wells.** The DEC proposal would potentially allow fracking in principal drinking water aquifers after additional environmental review, and near private wells if property owners waive their right to preserve a buffer.
- **Prohibit open pits for wastewater storage.**
- **Plan for wastewater disposal.** There is no wastewater treatment plant in New York designed to treat fracking wastes.
- **Consider health impacts.** The DEC omitted potential health impacts from its draft environmental review, and has so far ignored a letter signed by 250 doctors and health care professionals calling for an independent health impact analysis.
- **Analyze cost to communities** for social and emergency services, schools and infrastructure, including road maintenance.
- **Analyze potential negative economic effects** on other industries, like agriculture and tourism.
- **Consider private property impacts**, such as decreased property values, liability for damage due to gas drilling and difficulties getting bank loans for properties encumbered by gas leases.
- **Study the potential for fracking to trigger earthquakes.**

What can you do to help?

New York State needs to hear from you, its citizens. Your comments can help protect our water quality and quality of life for future generations. Flip this sheet for detailed instructions about commenting, and for a listing of public hearings to attend. Remember, the **comment period ends Dec. 12.** This is your last and best chance to make a difference on this critical environmental issue.



*A fracking site in West Virginia.
Photo courtesy WVSORO*



*Drinking water of Dimock PA resident.
Photo courtesy Jay Simpson*



THREE WAYS TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

1. Submit comments on New York State's draft fracking proposals:

The Department of Environmental Conservation is accepting comments **only until Dec. 12**. The DEC does not accept comments by phone, fax or email. Mail written comments, with your name and address, to:

Attn: dSCEIS Comments
New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
625 Broadway, Albany, NY 12233-6510.

Or, submit your comments online at <http://www.dec.ny.gov/energy/76838.html>.

When you get to the DEC's comment page, you will notice the agency has three proposals open for comment. It's most important to comment on the revised draft environmental impact statement (listed as "2011 rdSCEIS"). If you have time, also comment on the proposed regulations (listed as "Proposed HVHF Regulations").

Submitting your comments to the DEC online is a multi-step process, so please follow the directions to guarantee the DEC registers your comments. We recommend typing your comments ahead of time.

You'll be asked to input your name and other personal information. We recommend that you don't identify yourself as affiliated with Riverkeeper or any other group unless you're a staff member; comments made by affiliates of an organization may be grouped together, rather than counted separately. You'll be asked to select one of 25 categories for your comments. If in doubt, choose "General Comments on the 2011 Revisions." If you have comments that fall into several categories, you can submit them one at a time. For further information or assistance with you can contact the DEC's Bureau of Public Outreach by email at public@gw.dec.state.ny.us or by calling 518-402-8044.

2. Attending a Hearing

The DEC will hold three more public hearings on its proposed regulations and environmental impact statement in November. You can speak your mind, and/or submit written comments at these hearings. Each hearing is from 1-4 p.m. and 6-9 p.m. at each location:

- Nov. 17 at The Forum Theatre, 236 Washington Street, Binghamton, N.Y.
- Nov. 29 at the Sullivan County Community College, Seelig Theatre, 112 College Road, Loch Sheldrake, N.Y.
- Nov. 30 at Tribeca Performing Arts Center, 199 Chambers Street, New York, N.Y.

Join Riverkeeper at the Nov. 30 hearing in New York City!

3. Support Riverkeeper

Riverkeeper, a member-supported organization, has been working to protect the Hudson River and the water supply for millions of New Yorkers for more than 45 years. Learn more about our fracking, Indian Point, Hudson River water quality, Brooklyn waterways and other campaigns by visiting riverkeeper.org. The annual cost of membership is \$40 and is tax-deductible. (\$20 for students or seniors).

*For more information, or to become a member, please contact us at:
Riverkeeper, 20 Secor Road, Ossining, NY 10562, (800) 21-RIVER, (914) 478-4501
info@riverkeeper.org, www.riverkeeper.org*