

Greetings,

I appreciate all the work you are doing. My husband has spent days researching the latest technology from Honeywell that allows for incredibly efficient, house-top windmills. We are at the lower end of the middle class, but with the help you are giving, we are planning to have a completely green house by the end of next year using geothermal and windmill technology.

You are doing great work in these areas. In fact, my husband, who is a knifemaker and not a “crunchy granola” environmentalist, loves the idea of living an independent life that supports the community and does not pollute.

For this reason, I have to voice extreme concerns at your energy plan. Your plan stresses the importance of natural gas and advises drilling in the Marcellus Shale. With your guidance, the governor just gave \$2.5 million dollars to build yet another pipeline.

However, natural gas drilling will have an adverse affect both on the economy and on the environment.

The Economy:

The natural gas industry faces exception from superfund regulations. This means that New York will have to pay for any and all cleanup efforts from environmental damage. There have been 100's if not thousands of documented cases of aquifer damage, and as the *New York Times* indicated in its editorial just last week, drilling in New York is especially hazardous. Note, too, that we have no long term studies as to drilling impacts, and a plume of over twenty miles has been located in Wyoming. This means that local aquifers may be impacted and that the New York City aquifer may be impacted.

If the New York City aquifer is at all impacted, we will have to pay for a \$10 billion dollar treatment facility, not to mention a loss in revenue as New York becomes a less desirable place to live and housing values decrease. We in the Southern Tier know this. We have lost children to toxic plumes, and areas in which toxic plumes are located have seen substantial home equity loss.

I have spoken to experts, and they have told me that drilling near my house will cause a loss in equity. If my water is contaminated, I will not be able to sell it – my bank would not mortgage another person to purchase it. Banks are hedgy even now about giving mortgages to properties that even hold leases; from what I know, my bank will not do so. Obviously, home values impact the economy tremendously.

The realtor also told me that many of the so called “poor farmers” who are set to make money from leases, are actually people from other countries and states, or entities like Chesapeake that have basically cheated people into leasing their land, and then flipped the leases.

My husband and I are already making plans to move. If New York loses its place the financial capital of the world and loses its watershed, what is to keep people living in Westchester as well? Gas drilling will not serve to generate real stability on Wall Street; indeed, it is already spoken of as the next bubble to crash. And I know my family in Westchester will move if the watershed is jeopardized. Why would anyone with resources stay?

Economic studies that look only at gains do show (obviously) gains from this industry. However, reports that look at all factors, give a different picture. [Headwater Economics](#), a not-for-profit research group has found that local economies that rely on gas and oil show less growth than those which do not.

What is particularly sad is that true industry is not being encouraged in New York. If you can give \$2.5 million for a pipeline (and to a Canadian company, no less) while you cut DEC jobs, not to mention every other part of the state budget, then why can't that money have gone to give Singer-Link a contract to build technology related to renewable energy? I am so angry about this. I have lived in the Binghamton Area for over twenty years, and I am astounded that my own state Senator would support \$2.5 million for a pipeline, and yet no one at NYSERDA thought to give money in contracts to produce real green energy that is not fossil fuel based from the engineers who are now rapidly leaving New York, as the layoffs at IBM and Singer-Link continue to contribute to the state's brain drain.

Really, this is inexcusable.

The Environment and Health:

However, this economic turmoil is nothing compared to the adverse environmental impacts of this form of production, impacts that we have no long-term studies concerning, but which even in the course of a year have brought aquifer contamination, wet-land pollution, and fish-kills to one site in Pennsylvania. What will it do to New York? And who will pay for the health care? New York has long seen the link between air pollution and asthma. Natural gas production causes substantial air pollution. It also causes serious health risks.

The DEC will be holding hearings in NYC on November 10 regarding the draft of the SGEIS -- the regulations that will allow drilling NY. The regs are about 900 pages long, and from what I hear are unsatisfactory (e.g. calling for minimal concrete hardness for concrete well casings, little to no protection for NYC watershed, allowing open-pits in all other areas, many of which are prone to flooding/flash flooding, not looking at cumulative impacts when 2,000 wells are projected by industry, not requiring companies to state where they will dump/process millions of gallons of toxic "produced" water until after the company has already gotten a permit, etc.).

I highly recommend that you find out more. [Alarm has already been raised in NYC](#), as well as the [hearings, concerns, NYC DEP actions and studies](#). Documented incidences of [water contamination](#) (and [many more](#)) and studies regarding [air pollution](#) and [toxins from air pollutions](#) associated with this industry are not lacking. Every day I get new reports -- it's not difficult. They are in the newspapers in Colorado, Wyoming, Texas -- anywhere that shale gas is extracted.

If you won't believe me, believe the mayor of Dish, Texas. As you probably know, they are drilling out in Texas, where they've already had two studies showing air pollution to be a horrible problem both in volume and for health, and where they'd had earthquakes (yes, [earthquakes are associated with drilling](#) -- not to mention [mud volcanoes](#)). (As an aside, a scientist from Columbia University talked to time about concerns that New York has a fault line that has not released pressure in some time, and that drilling in and around this fault-line could cause a major earthquake. He wanted to study the matter, and, as I reported here, did not want to raise alarms, as he did not know this for certain as he had not been able to scientifically study the matter.)

In any case, the mayor of Dish Texas, an area where they are drilling as they hope to in New York, is asking for help.

Here's his email in full.

The news that I continually get makes this nightmare worse and worse. I have yet another twenty something young lady who has undiagnosed neurological problems that started when she moved here. She has been shipped out of state for testing on a number of occasions, and they have been unable to diagnose the problems she is having. I am having difficult time in know what the next move should be. I wonder if there is a medical doctor out there who may come to help us here? Maybe there would be someone who could perform toxicology tests on the citizens. *Please give me any input you may have, and if you know of anyone who may be willing to help, please let us know.* Maybe you could post something on your websites or blogs soliciting help. Together I know you reach thousands of people. Thanks.

Calvin Tillman
Mayor, DISH, TX

Climate Change:

Natural gas has been touted as a “clean burning” fuel; however, as the Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter noted today in its call for a ban on natural gas drilling in New York, if one looks at pollution that occurs in production, natural gas is about equal to coal. And I’m not sure we are even taking everything into account even then. For example, production does not necessarily include distribution. As [The New York Times](#) recently noted, methane leaks are contributing to global warming. New technology may help, but this is not being implemented on a widespread basis nor do you mandate it. The result is that we are polluting at every stage of natural gas use: in production, in pipes, and in usage. Remember, methane is twenty-five more powerful in inducing climate change than standard Co2.

And may I add that there are substantial social costs involved with your plan, as imminent domain will have to be used for some of the thousands of pipelines that will be needed to connect methane that is released from the ground to the various facilities for processing, transportation, etc. Moreover, the boom-and-bust economy of natural gas will change the fabric of rural New York, as the area becomes an industrial zone and traditional industries such as hunting, fishing and tourism are no longer possible.

You are good people, but I fear that you have written your report in great ignorance and can do great harm with it. Please reconsider.

With warm regards,

Laura Seltz

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