

Press



Release

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For Immediate Release

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Rockland County Legislature Asks Congress to Pass Hydraulic Fracturing Responsibility Act

New City, NY (August 4, 2010) - The Rockland County Legislature approved a resolution introduced by Legislators Alden H. Wolfe and Connie Coker asking Congress to pass "The (Hydraulic) Fracturing Responsibility and Awareness of Chemicals Act" (FRAC Act). (House of Representatives' bill H.R. 2766 and Senate bill S.1215)

Hydraulic fracturing, also known as hydrofracking, is a controversial process used to extract underground resources such as natural gas. The process involves drilling deep horizontal wells in areas of shale and infusing massive quantities of water and potentially toxic chemical additives into the wells to fracture the shale and release the underground resource. The fracturing fluids are then returned to the surface, creating the potential for health issues, contamination of the surrounding environment, watersheds, and municipal and private well-based drinking water.

"Under current law, hydraulic fracturing is exempt from the requirements of our nation's Safe Drinking Water Act," said Legislator Wolfe. "The FRAC Act would remove this exemption, and require that the companies using this technique disclose the chemicals that they're injecting into the ground. It's horrifying to think that the energy industry can pump chemicals into the earth with relative impunity, which is why it's an absolute imperative to bring this practice under the regulatory umbrella of the Federal government."

Wolfe said that the Environmental Protection Agency has announced that it will be conducting a scientific study to investigate and identify potential risks to water quality and public health that may be associated with hydrofracking. Wolfe added, "I appreciate our need to tap into natural energy resources, particularly our domestic reserves of natural gas, however we have to understand and mitigate the risks and collateral damage that may result from this invasive process."

Legislator Coker said, "One of the critical roles of government is to protect the health and safety of residents. We are calling upon the U.S. Congress to adopt this legislation in order to safeguard our water supply." In June, the County Legislature passed a resolution introduced by Coker to urge Governor Paterson to impose a statewide moratorium on drilling projects pending the scientific assessments and reviews by state, federal and independent environmental agencies.

Wolfe and Coker's resolution received approval of the Legislature at the August 3, 2010 meeting.

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