



CROTON WATERSHED
CLEAN WATER COALITION, INC.
9 Old Corner Road, Bedford, NY 10506

Ph: 914-234-3179 Fax: 914-234-6139 crotonwshed@aol.com, www.newyorkwater.org

June 15th, 2012

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo,

The Croton Watershed Clean Water Coalition, Inc. (CWCWC) is a not-for-profit organization comprising over 50 coalition groups – housing, community, environmental and religious whose original purpose was to maintain the high quality of the waters of the Croton Watershed in order to avoid filtration. Incorporated in 1998, we have since broadened our activities to all areas of NYS where water quality is being threatened.

We are writing to urge you, in the strongest terms, to ban high-volume hydrofracturing with horizontal component (“fracking”) in all of NYS, even in those areas that support it.

Our considered opinion, based on facts, is that it is impossible to confine the effects of fracking to those areas where it occurs. While some municipalities might welcome fracking because of perceived financial benefits, its ill-effects such as air and water pollution know no boundaries. Inevitably, air pollution generated at fracking sites, together with the cumulative effects of pollution from thousands of heavy trucks traveling through the countryside, carrying water and chemicals, will spread to other areas.

A single fracking operation can require up to 5 million gallons of fresh water. Eight to ten wells can be sustained at one drilling pad, and sixteen of these are permitted per square mile. The high density of drilling pads permitted under the DSGEIS will require voluminous withdrawals of fresh water that is subsequently carried to the drill sites by heavy truckloads. There is nothing to prevent this water from being withdrawn from areas where fracking is not permitted. Yet, those areas will be subjected to heavy truck traffic, depletion of their fresh water supplies, and severe damage to their roads, the repair of which will be at local taxpayers’ expense.

The water that is withdrawn from these areas is for consumptive use only, forever lost to the hydrological cycle or any further use by the providers. It is a gift for which the ‘non-frackers’ can never be repaid. They are also in danger of having their Principal Aquifers polluted. According to a recent report by the USGS, (<http://www.scribd.com/doc/83492110/USGS>), the delineation of NYS Principal Aquifers is outdated and “highly inaccurate” when projected to the 1:24,000 scale.

Coalition members: ADK Mohican * Audubon Society: Bedford, Bronx River/Sound Shore, Central Westchester, Hudson River, Saw Mill River groups * Bedford Barrow Commerce Block Association * Bedford Garden Club * Bronx Greens * Catskill Heritage Alliance * Church of Holy Apostles * Citizens for Equal Environmental Protection (CEEP) * Clean Water for the Bronx * Coalition for the Preservation of Rolling Greens * Concerned Citizens for Open Space * Concerned Residents of Carmel-Mahopac * Concerned Residents of Kent * Concerned Residents of Southeast * Council of Chelsea Block Associations * Croton Heights Community Association * Dickerson Mountain Preservation Association * Diocesan Missionary & Church Extension Society * Episcopal Diocese of New York * Federated Conservationists of Westchester County (FCWC) * Friends of the Great Swamp (FrOGS) * Friends of Hudson River Sloop Clearwater * Friends of Hudson River Sloop Clearwater - NYC * George Nikitovich, *et al* * Goldens Bridge Community Association * Grassroots * Hands Across the Border (HAB) * Housing Development Fund Cooperative Council (HDFC) * Hudson River Sloop Clearwater * Huntersville Association * INTERLOC * Jay Heritage Center * Junior League of Westchester-on-Hudson * Lake Dutchess Association, Inc. * Metropolitan Council on Housing * Putnam County Coalition to Preserve Open Space * Queens Civic Congress * Regional Review League - Bedford * Rusticus Garden Club * Sierra Club: Atlantic Chapter, Lower Hudson, NYC, Ramapo-Catskill Groups * Regional Review League – Bedford * Rusticus Garden Club * Shorewalkers, Inc. * Southern Yorktown Homeowners’ Association * Teatown Lake Reservation, Inc. * Trout Unlimited: Croton Watershed and NYC Chapters * Westchester Land Trust * Yorktown Land Trust

Because of the heavy trucks that access the drilling pads together with other heavy equipment, the drilling pads are rendered impervious. The inevitable oil, gas and chemical leakages will get washed, during rainstorms, into neighboring streams and carried downstream where fracking is not permitted.

Even more dangerous are the open pools containing fracking flowback/produced water, and lined only with plastic. These waters contain chemicals that are used for the initial drilling, some of which are known carcinogens. In addition, the produced water contains high levels of salts, heavy metals, and dangerously high levels of radium-226 that decays into radon, the second highest cause of lung cancer in the US. Radium-226 has a half-life of 1600 years, about 80 generations. These open pools are prone to overflow during heavy storms and their lethal ingredients carried into lakes, ponds, wetlands and streams, and into neighboring areas.

The safe disposal of flowback/produced water is a major problem for which a solution has yet to be found. The “solution” that is presently offered to the public is to give this lethal mixture a different name – to classify it as “industrial” rather than appropriately as “hazardous”. In this way, much of the fracking waste can be disposed of far and wide on roads throughout NYS, ostensibly for deicing and dust control purposes. No NYS POTWs are licensed to treat this waste. Thus, the non-fracking communities will also be the “beneficiaries”, for many generations, of the waste products of those communities that frack.

We draw the inevitable conclusion that permitting fracking in selected areas that want it will inflict incalculable harm on areas that do not want it, and where it is prohibited.

The effects of fracking, whether air or water pollution, simply cannot be contained at their points of origin. There is no way to prevent this pollution from spreading. It is meaningless to ban it in some areas and permit it in other areas. It should be banned throughout NYS.

However, economic stimuli for those areas that are struggling and therefore opted for fracking must be a top priority. Many of those areas are agricultural. The production of healthy food far outranks the need for natural gas of which the surplus in the US is causing the transformation of import to export facilities – and higher prices.

Fracking is an exploitive industry. Extracting gas from deep within the earth requires harsh methods that devastate lands that once supported viable enterprises such as forestry, tourism and agriculture. Having extracted the gas and closed the wells, the gas company will move on, leaving behind contaminated soils, polluted streams, fragmented forests – a despoiled, uninviting landscape for tourism. It’s a false economy to invest in a boom that is bound to bust.

As NYS residents, we deeply resent being exploited for the benefit of the oil/gas companies that mine our natural resources to the detriment of our land. This is a classic example of colonialism. NYS must not be allowed to become a colony of the oil/gas companies.

Governor Cuomo - As steward of the state, you are responsible for the health of its people, of its streams, lakes, aquifers; its forests and farms – not just during your own tenure but to pass on as your legacy, in perpetuity. Please deliver the state in as pristine condition as you found it.

Sincerely,

Fay Muir, President
CWCWC, Inc.

