



*News from*  
**State Senator Antoine Thompson**

Chair, Senate Environmental Conservation Committee

For Immediate Release: August 13, 2010  
Media contact: Ken Houston, Press Secretary  
sk2houston@hotmail.com 716.854.8705 |

**PROTECTING OUR DRINKING WATER**

Senator Antoine Thompson, Residents & Advocates Urge  
Moratorium on Gas Drilling Which Could Pollute New York's Drinking Water

(Buffalo, NY) Gas drilling in New York could contaminate the drinking water of more than 12 million New York residents. Putting public safety over the interests of gas companies, the Senate Democratic Majority has passed legislation sponsored by Senator Antoine Thompson (D-Parts of Buffalo and Niagara County) mandating a temporary moratorium on gas drilling ("hydro-fracking") to ensure adequate time to research safety measures and regulations. However, that legislation also requires passage in the State Assembly before it can be sent to the Governor's desk for approval.

The Senate, on August 3, 2010, overwhelmingly passed S8129B/Thompson by a vote of 48-9. This bill provides for a suspension, until May 15, 2011, of the issuance of new permits for the drilling of a well which utilizes the practice of hydraulic fracturing. The legislation is now awaiting action by the Assembly before it can be sent to the Governor for his support.

This moratorium will help to accomplish several goals, including:

- Providing an extended period of time to study this new technology before permits are issued and drilling is allowed.
- Ensuring environmental experts and the public have time to review any proposed regulations and offer ways to make them stronger.
- Allocating enough time for the Legislature to review the DEC's conclusions on the environmental impact of the gas drilling.

Senator Antoine Thompson, Chair of the Environmental Conservation Committee said, "Our drinking water in New York State could possibly be in jeopardy. We are simply asking for an in-depth study to be conducted before drilling decisions are made that could possibly have catastrophic affects on our natural resources and families. My colleagues and I in the Majority Senate passed legislation to put a halt on drilling temporarily, and I urge the Assembly to do the same."

"The Sierra Club favors a moratorium which will give the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation sufficient time to develop regulations to protect our water and farmland concerning the new technology of mega-hydrofracturing for natural gas in shale. The very nature of the Marcellus Shale formations found in our State makes the safety of mega-hydrofracturing techniques here questionable," said Bob Ciesielski Sierra Club, Niagara Group, Chair.

"Contamination from hydro-fracking in Pennsylvania and other states demonstrates the real threats to New York's air, land, water, and people" said Brian Smith, WNY Program Director for Citizens Campaign for the Environment. "Citizens Campaign for the Environment commends Senator Thompson for championing sensible precautions and securing a proactive moratorium in the Senate, and we now strongly urge the Assembly and the Governor to take action and make this law as soon as possible."

"This is huge news! Senator Thompson and the NY State Senate have shown incredible foresight and leadership by passing a moratorium on hydraulic fracturing to protect the citizens of New York State," said Filmmaker Josh Fox, producer of Gasland. "This is a thunderbolt that will and must echo across the nation and across the world. If sanity is to prevail and if the immense suffering and damage caused by this unregulated, unsafe and irresponsible drilling is to stop, it will be because the world listened to New York.

"We applaud this important move and urge the assembly to pass the bill and to continue this moratorium as far into the future as necessary. Currently hydraulic fracturing is exempt from the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act, the Clean Water Act, the Clean Air Act and the Superfund law and drilling cannot be safe without these fundamental public health protections. I implore the federal government to pass the Frac Act to re-regulate the industry and I hope that Pennsylvania, Colorado, Texas, Wyoming, West Virginia and all the 34 states besieged by this massive drilling campaign will find the nerve to stand up against Big Gas and their inherently contaminating process and follow New York's lead in protecting their citizens."

"What Cabot Oil & Gas did to us in Dimock, Pennsylvania is absolutely disgraceful! We won't rest until they're held accountable for every wrong doing they did to us. We can live without gas, but we can't live without water," said Craig and Julie Sautner, victims of hydro-fracking in Dimock, Pennsylvania and supporters of Senator Thompson's moratorium legislation in New York.

### What Is Hydro-Fracking?

Hydro-fracking is the process of breaking apart the rock under the earth, in which some natural resources are trapped, by forcing millions of gallons of waters mixed with chemicals into the ground. These chemicals then work their way into the regular water supply.

The side effects of this process are extraordinarily costly and personally devastating, as families across Pennsylvania and other states have learned after rushing into drilling. The public health concerns are well documented and economically, if something went wrong, New Yorkers cannot afford to foot the bill. On top of the economic and health concerns, there are considerable safety

hazards within the untested drilling process. Since May there have been two instances of gas wells exploding, and both took lives.

The extended time to research and study hydro-fracking technology provided by the moratorium will ensure New York does not join states like Pennsylvania and suffer the same consequences. Our state must take the alternate path to study this new technology and its effects in order to appropriately protect both our people and our environment.

The first step preserving safety for New Yorkers has been taken by the Senate, and as the DEC is beginning to prepare for the drilling license process it is crucial that the Assembly takes immediate action.

For more information visit <http://open.nysenate.gov/legislation/api/1.0/html/bill/S8129B>.

###