



Gangs of New York

Flush with falsehoods and hyperbole, anti-energy activists promise to “overwhelm the DEC” at NY Marcellus hearings this week

The problem for the dog that chases the car, it’s often said, is that sometimes he catches it.

Just ask your neighborhood anti-energy activist in New York. Bowing to pressure last week, the state’s Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) announced it was **extending by 30 days** the public comment period on the agency’s **draft regulations** governing the safe development of clean-burning natural gas from the Marcellus – a review and rule-making process that has already gone on for the better part of three years.

It was a demand made predominantly by **those who oppose** the safe conversion of these homegrown energy resources into **jobs, revenue and opportunity** for New Yorkers – on philosophical grounds, for the most part. Naturally, the extension was granted, and as expected, environmentalists across the state applauded DEC for taking the time to get things right. Right?

Not exactly. Turns out the anti-energy crowd had no trouble catching the bumper; what it really wanted, though, was the car. And driver. This letter to the editor, typical of these groups’ response to the 30-day extension, was posted last week in the **Elmira Star-Gazette**:

[DEC’s] 30-day extension ... falls short. A more sensible approach would be a gas drilling **moratorium** pending completion of a study of the issue by the Environmental Protection Agency.

Put aside the fact that EPA **actually did** conduct a **five-year-long study** of the technology involved in shale gas development, released to the public in 2004. Put aside the fact that the agency found this technology to be categorically safe, capable of posing “little or no threat” to supplies of drinking water residing thousands – in some cases, **tens of thousands** – of feet from areas in which fracturing activities take place. Put aside the fact that hydraulic fracturing has been in commercial use for **more than 60 years now**, not once in that time having been credibly tied to the contamination of drinking water.

Put aside all that. The real motivation here has nothing to do with comment periods, oversight, studies, or public participation. What it has everything to do with is shutting the process down – cold, hard and fast. And though it took them a while to work up the courage to say so, some activists in New York – including the president of the Manhattan Borough – are **starting to ‘fess up** to that true intent of this entire campaign:

Join Manhattan Borough president Scott Stringer's **Kill the Drill** campaign. ... Please join us at a rally and press conference in front of the school at 5:00pm.

Scott Stringer's "Kill the Drill" campaign? Doesn't sound much like Scott Stringer's "Extend the Comment Period" campaign to us. Of course, if Mr. Stringer was the only [source of information](#) we had on the safety and performance of hydraulic fracturing, we'd be worried about the process as well. This week, he posted a [snazzy new video](#) on the Huffington Post claiming that shale gas exploration "causes mini-earthquakes to extract the gas." Worse than that, the process has contaminated "watersheds across the nation with plastics, carcinogens, mutagens, and endocrine disrupting chemicals."

Of course, it's doubtful that Mr. Stringer caught the piece in the [Dallas Morning News](#) this past August debunking the claim that fracturing has anything to do with earthquakes. And naturally, he doesn't take the time in his video or accompanying press release to back up his assertion that "secret" fracturing activities have contaminated "watersheds across the nation."

But just in case his curiosity gets the better of him: DEC lists the materials used in the process [here](#) (page 130); Pennsylvania's DEP [does the same](#); the Ground Water Protection Council (GWPC) offers up [the following](#) on its site (page 62); and Energy In Depth [breaks it down](#) in a fact sheet as well.

One last point about Mr. Stringer's "rally and press conference" going down at 5:00 pm: That's happening **TODAY** at 5:00 pm, at [Stuyvesant](#) High School on Chambers Street in New York City. And it's shaping up to be quite a party, too. This "tweet" comes from a major anti-energy activist in the state:

WE MUST **OVERWHELM** THE DEC AT THE NOV. 10TH MEETING ON DRAFT SGEIS AT STUYVESANT HIGH SCHOOL 6PM, 345 CHAMBERS ST - BE THERE & **FIGHT THE FRAC!**

Maybe when we're done with that, perhaps we can fight the [caps lock](#) as well?

Notwithstanding the circus expected tonight, New York residents interested in showing up to defend their property rights and speak out in support of responsible energy access have a few more bites at the apple in the weeks ahead. [This schedule](#), posted on DEC's website and excerpted below, is up-to-date. Additionally, folks [can go here](#) to submit a comment (until Dec. 31) – one we're told will actually be read by someone in the department.

Tuesday, November 10, Stuyvesant High School, NYC

Thursday, November 12, Chenango Valley High School, Chenango Bridge, NY

Wednesday, November 18, Corning East High School, Corning, NY 14830.

So there you have it: The battle lines have been drawn, and the dates, times and venues for the fight have been established. Now it's up to us to show. We know they will. And we know they'll be [in need](#) of some half-decent facts when they get there.

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