

307 Seventh Avenue, Suite 1403
New York, NY 10001
www.wccny.org



Telephone: 212-353-8070
Facsimile: 212-228-4665
Email: info@wccny.org

Comments on the SGEIS for the Marcellus Shale and Drilling for Natural Gas by Hydraulic Fracturing in the NYC Watershed December 21, 2009

The Women's City Club of New York respectfully submits the following comments on the Department of Environmental Conservation's draft Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement (SGEIS) on the potential environmental impacts of gas drilling and hydraulic-fracturing in the Marcellus Shale formation, and its proposed measures to mitigate the environmental impacts of this activity.

The Women's City Club is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that since its founding in 1915 has shaped public policy through education, issue analysis, advocacy and civic participation. The WCC has long been concerned with the safety, adequacy and cost of New York City's vital water supply. We urge the DEC and Governor Paterson to take steps to ban gas drilling in at least that portion of the Marcellus Shale that underlies the New York City watershed.

Gas drilling involving the hydraulic fracturing process involves injecting water, sand and chemical additives into the shale at extremely high pressure. Because Marcellus Shale formations are so deep, millions of gallons of water are required and millions of gallons of contaminated water are produced. Some of the chemicals used in this process are known carcinogens, and the waste water from drilling in the Marcellus formation has also been found to contain unusually high levels of naturally occurring radioactive materials. While the DEC has proposed mitigation measures that, if strictly enforced, would lessen the chance of contamination of the City's water supply, substantial risks remain.

More than 90 percent of the city's water supply comes from the Catskills/Delaware watershed. Under terms of an agreement with the federal Environmental Protection Agency, the state and upstate communities, the City has already allocated more than \$630 million from fiscal years 2008 through 2017 to protect the watershed and avoid the need to build a filtration plant. If the City were to fall out of compliance with its filtration avoidance agreement as a result of chemicals in the runoff from drilling, or other development in the watershed area, the City could be forced to build a large filtration plant at a cost of \$6 billion-\$10 billion. Such a requirement would result in a huge increase in the cost of water to City residents and businesses.

The Women's City Club seeks to ensure a vital and sustainable future for our children, our city and our region, and we strongly oppose any activity that endangers our precious water supply.

For more information, please contact Joan Freilich, Chair, Environment and Infrastructure Committee, jsf1002@aol.com or Ruth Acker, President, racker@wccny.org.