



Drilling Meeting Controversy

Published: 12/07 6:59 pm

Updated: 12/07 7:19 pm

Binghamton Mayor Matt Ryan was on the offensive today after what he calls erroneous claims made by a pro-drilling agency.

Back on Monday, Matt Ryan attended a meeting hosted by the New York State Petroleum Council. He, like all other elected officials in Broome and Tioga counties, were invited. He also brought a guest, **Walter Hang of Toxics Targeting**. Hang has helped lead the charge against allowing fracking in New York State.

Towards the end of the forum, Ryan and Hang raised their concerns about fracking during a question and answer period. An article posted by the organization Energy In Depth said that Ryan was not invited and crashed the forum. Ryan says that's clearly false and takes exception to it.

Mayor Matt Ryan says, "That's totally not true. I notice now that they're back tracking on that. Someone called me and said they are scrambling to set the record straight, oh yes he was invited. But, this is what they do. They take things and turn them and twist them."

A spokesman for Energy In Depth says the organization did have two field reporters at the Empire Energy Forum. He says that Hang was an uninvited guest and was asked to leave, although in the end did not after Mayor Ryan objected.

Energy In Depth says it was characterizing the mayor's attendance and says it was disrespectful for the mayor to bring a known anti-fracking activist to the forum. As to the issue of the term crash, Energy says that can be open to interpretation.

A spokesman for the New York State Petroleum Association says that while all officials were invited, guests were not encouraged. Karen Moreau says that Ryan asked ahead of time if he could bring his wife to the forum and he was told yes. However, she says instead Walter Hang showed up.

Moreau says it appears that Mayor Ryan used the situation as an opportunity to grandstand.