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NY Records Show History of Oil, Gas Well Problems

By Jake Sorgen



Credit Ryan Delaney/WAMC

Pipes sit on US Salt property in Reading, NY awaiting approval for Finger Lakes LPG to build a natural gas storage facility.

State regulators claim a strong record of oil and gas industry oversight, but their own reports show thousands of unplugged abandoned wells and other problems that threaten the environment and public safety.

Annual reports and incident reports prepared by Department of Environmental Conservation staff run counter to the agency's long-stated assertion that the types of problems reported in other states have been prevented in New York by strong regulations.

Problems include unplugged abandoned wells leaking brine, vegetation killed by leaking waste pits, and crude oil contaminating residential wells and streams.

A DEC spokeswoman said Wednesday that agency enforcement personnel have resolved or are working to address problems noted in the DEC reports.

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