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Coalition Letter Requesting Governor Paterson to withdraw the Department of Environmental Conservation's Draft Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement (dSGEIS) for Oil and Gas Mining

Honorable David A. Paterson
State Capital
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Paterson:

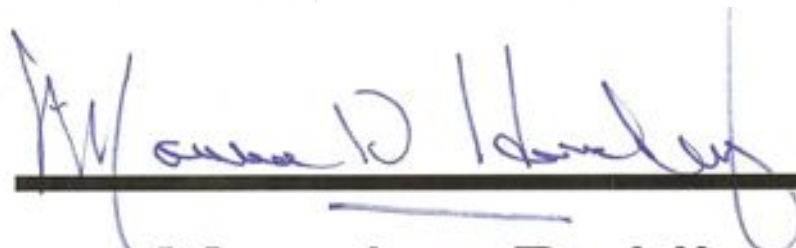
We, the undersigned, strongly support safeguarding the environment, public health and natural resources of the Catskills, Finger Lakes and Southern Tier regions that overlay the Marcellus Shale formation, potentially the largest natural gas reservoir in America. That is why we write to request you to withdraw the draft Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement released on 9/30/09 by your Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC).

High-volume "slickwater" hydrofracking has been proposed to recover Marcellus Shale gas on an unprecedented scale, but you required DEC to update its 1992 Oil, Gas and Solution Mining Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) prior to issuing new horizontal drilling permits. The goal of that Supplemental GEIS (SGEIS) reportedly was "to ensure that all environmental impacts from drilling are addressed."

The Draft SGEIS is based on one critical, bedrock assumption: DEC's 1992 GEIS adequately safeguards against: "impacts on water quality; impacts of drilling in sensitive areas, such as Agricultural Districts, areas of rugged topography, wetlands, drinking water watersheds, freshwater aquifers and other sensitive habitats; impacts caused by drilling and production wastes; impacts on land use; socioeconomic impacts; impacts on cultural resources and impacts on endangered species and species of concern."

A total of 270 oil and gas spills is posted at www.toxicstargeting.com. These uncontrolled releases caused fires, explosions, massive pollution releases, contaminated drinking water sources, home evacuations, tainted farmland and widespread threats to wetlands, streams, ponds, aquifers and other "sensitive receptors." Many of these DEC-reported problems have exceeded clean up standards for decades.

DEC's own data document systematic, on-going failures to prevent oil and gas drilling pollution impacts or to clean them up. It is imperative that DEC resolve those regulatory shortcomings prior to issuing new drilling permits. Otherwise, the City of New York's reservoirs, other critical water supply sources and the environment of the Marcellus region as a whole could become irreparably contaminated.



Maurice D. Hinchey