

Fracking Battle Set For Binghamton

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(Source: Jason Weinstein)



As the D-E-C gets set to hold public fracking hearings in Binghamton Thursday, it's task is not easy:

"Regulate what is by all accounts an intrusive industry but an industry that could have some real economic benefits," said Coughlin & Gerhart attorney Robert McKertich.

At the center of the hearings will be the D-E-C's latest Economic Impact Study, or S-GEIS. Those in favor of fracking say it's time to finalize the S-GEIS and move on.

"We've seen drilling in New York for 100 years. As you know we have over 14,000 active wells in our state so the D-E-C is very familiar with the process. They've made some modifications to really address high-volume hydrofracking," says Scott Kurkoski, an attorney for the Joint Landowners Coalition.

Fracking opponents say the S-GEIS is inadequate and will tell the D-E-C tomorrow to go back to the drawing board.

"It would allow wastewater to be spread on our streets and roads. It doesn't deal with the radioactivity issues. There are just so many ways that it's insufficient," said Ben Perkus of NYRAD.

Kurkoski and his landowners coalition feel it's time to set the regulations and start drilling.

"We right now are in a competition for this business with Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Virginia," said Kurkoski.

Others are ready to present a different view.

"You generate this toxic gas drilling wastewater. We don't have a single treatment plant in New York to handle this material. And the scale of the industrialization is simply unprecedented in 100 years," said Walter Hang of Toxics Targeting.

But after tomorrow, it could be just weeks before the D-E-C issues its final regulations.

"I think we'll have more concrete regulations and better understanding of where the D-E-C is by the first half of next year," said McKertich.

****In Binghamton, Jason Weinstein, Fox 40 News. ****