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Binghamton prepares for DEC hydrofracking hearings

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Citizens in Binghamton will have the opportunity to speak about the hydraulic fracturing process this week. The DEC is holding a public hearing on the topic Thursday. Our Melissa Kakareka tells us what people can expect at the event.



BINGHAMTON, N.Y. -- Advocates on both sides of the hydrofracking debate will make their voice heard at the Forum Theatre in Binghamton Thursday.

"We're going to be here at dawn, we're going to get in line so that people are able to testify," said President of Toxics Targeting Walter Hang.

The event is one of four public hearings where citizens can comment on the DEC's proposed guidelines for hydraulic fracturing in the state. But there are rules for those who are hoping to speak.

"They have to get there and sign up and there's two to three hour sessions," explained Binghamton Mayor Matt Ryan.

Entry to the locations will begin about an hour before the hearings are set to begin. Speakers will have the opportunity to talk on a first come, first serve basis and will have three minutes to comment. City officials say they are preparing for large crowds to attend the meeting.

"We learned from last time that good preparation makes an orderly affair, so we're going to work on Washington Street to have an area for both groups to gather and we are going to try to leave one lane open depending on how big crowds are," said Ryan.

And they are hopeful that the hearing will help the status of the ongoing debate.

"This is one of the most important topics in our whole region, to make sure that if gas drilling does come, it happens safely," said Ryan.