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Protests planned for President's visit

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A hot button issue in the Southern Tier will come into play during the President's trip to the Southern Tier as both sides of the hydrofracking debate are gearing up to have their voices heard. As our Elyse Mickalonis explains, both groups are hoping for a big turn out to get their messages across.



BROOME COUNTY, N.Y. -- As area leaders prepare for President Obama's Southern Tier stop Friday, protestors are getting ready to confront the president about natural gas drilling.

"He really has turned a blind eye to science on this issue," said Isaac Silberman-Gorn, Citizen Action Environmental Organizer. "He touted this as a climate solution, in reality, fracking is much worse for the environment than non-carbon based solutions. To propose a multi-billion dollar investment in new carbon-based infrastructure is insane."

Toxics Targeting and Citizen Action are joining forces to call on thousands of people to raise their voices about the hydrofracking debate.

"We're all going to show up and confront the president that it is simply irresponsible to support shale fracking without assessing the health risks and adopting a pollution liability protection," said Walter Hang, Toxics Targeting President.

Those who are in favor are planning a support rally for the president saying there's been enough research done and that it could benefit the Southern Tier by creating new jobs.

"President Obama has been very supportive of the middle class and for better education," said Dan Fitzsimmons, Joint Landowners Coalition of New York President. "For the benefit of middle class, hydrofracking and drilling in our area will be a huge plus for our middle class and education."

Mayor Ryan says he believes the president is going to stick to talking about middle class education, but says it'll be interesting to see how he reacts to the fracking debate.

"Being in government, if people become really vocal and press their point if you're a good politician or good public servant you'll listen and at least take their concerns into consideration," said Matt Ryan, Binghamton Mayor.

Details are still being worked out as to where each side will be meeting up Friday, but one thing is clear: Both hope are hoping for many others to join their cause.

President Obama is scheduled to be at Binghamton University on Friday morning for a Town Hall meeting. Details on that part of his Upstate tour have not yet been released by the White House.

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