

Gas companies have proposed drilling in the Marcellus Shale, but at what cost? The Marcellus Shale in the New York area lies miles underground, much further down than any other state that drilling has occurred. To me this raises a lot of questions. If dangerous accidents happen in other drilling area where the shale is closer to the surface will it be worse for us because of how deep the shale is?

Drilling for gas is a very dangerous operation from beginning to end. The access roads and drilling pads will destroy the land, environment and animal habitats by clear-cutting forests. The rainwater run-off not having plants and hill to hold it back so it can seep back into the ground, will run directly into streams and rivers causing flooding and polluting our surface water. The fracking fluid is pushed into the shale at extremely high pressure to create cracks and crevices. Which are filled with sand, and only a portion of the fluid is pulled back out leaving toxic chemicals in the ground. A May 2009 report published by the U.S. Geological survey states “Whereas the percentage of chemical additives in a typical hydrofrac fluid is commonly less than 0.5 percent by volume, the quantity of the fluid used in these hydrofracs is so large that the additives in a three million gallon hydrofrac job, for example, would result in about 15,000 gallons of chemical in the waste. A single horizontal gas well may use up to six million gallons of water and 30,000 gallons of chemicals every time it is fracked and most wells are fracked multiple times.” Since the shale sits below the aquifer which provides Sullivan county residents, (who mainly rely on wells for their water) it leaves too much room for errors and contamination of our fresh water supply. Incidents such as water that will ignite from the amount of methane in it to the death of one hundred and sixty one species of fish and wildlife due to leaked fracking fluid. However, the gas companies still stand behind their words that the fluid is not harmful.

The gas drilling companies promise that this will bring new jobs to the area and help the economy, but in the little Pennsylvania town of Dimock that has a thirteen percent poverty rate, none of the residents are working at these wells, those jobs are all filled by people from out of state such as Colorado and Texas. It's a temporary boost but at what cost? Our health, our water and our land.

My family wants to look at trees and wildlife not gas rigs and holding tanks and we want to be able to drink our water. The drilling in Pennsylvania has only been active for two years and has already seen 3 “reported” accidents, the worst being the leaked fracking fluid. The dangers of drilling in Sullivan county are higher than others, because of the depth of the shale it will require much heavier doses of the toxic chemicals to get the gas flowing.

The most disturbing fact is that the natural gas companies are exempt from two specific laws that all other companies the U.S. must follow. These are the Clean Water Act and the Clean Air Act. They do not have to monitor if any toxic substances are being leaked into the air we breathe or the water we drink. They do not have to take responsibility for their actions. Another disturbing fact deals with our property. Although I own a piece of land the ground below the surface is still up for sale. Because I don't own the mineral rights, the gas companies can still come in and drill even if I refuse.

One family in Colorado who did refuse drilling on their land, now has a gas rig just one hundred and fifty feet away from their house. They have no legal recourse.

At what cost is it beneficial to allow drilling in our back yard. Drilling may bring some temporary, economic benefits, but also long-term health consequences. Drilling for gas is a dangerous operation and even though it is essential for energy in our country, the risks outweigh the benefits. Drilling in this area will put well over nine million peoples health at risk not to mention the animals and wild life. No product is worth the health and life of our country. Gas drilling in will be detrimental to Sullivan County and New York City and therefore needs to be abolished. This is not progress, progress would be spending this time and money on clean renewable energy such as solar and wind.

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