

Memorializing the Governor and the Legislature of the State of New York to place in effect a moratorium on hydrofracking, and requesting the Governor to pursue further independent scientific assessments to determine the risks associated with hydrofracking, and requesting Mr. Andrew Cuomo, Democratic Party candidate for Governor, to express his support of such moratorium

WHEREAS, the Catskill Region and the Delaware River Basin of New York face a potential environmental crisis in the form of hydraulic fracturing which involves drilling deep horizontal wells into areas of shale and infusing massive quantities of water and toxic chemicals into the wells to fracture the shale and release the gas (“hydrofracking”); and

WHEREAS, mineral rights are being solicited from landowners across this region with the expectation that New York will soon finalize its environmental review and commence issuing permits allowing hydrofracking in our region; and

WHEREAS, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Region 2, US Congressman Maurice Hinchey, NYS Conference of Environmental Health Directors, and employees of the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) itself, among numerous others, expressed serious concerns regarding the draft Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement on the Oil, Gas and Solution Mining Regulatory Program (SGEIS) and its adequacy to protect our natural resources and prevent permanent damage to our environment; and

WHEREAS, the failure of the DEC thus far to undertake a cumulative environmental impact study analyzing hydrofracking operations on a full build-out basis prior to finalizing the SGEIS is of significant concern; and

WHEREAS, the potential threat to the health and well-being of the citizens of Sullivan County is of great concern because the draft SGEIS does not address the public health issue; and

WHEREAS, the proposed state permitting requirements fail to prohibit chemicals used in the fracking fluids which are known to be carcinogenic, mutagenic or endocrine disruptors and therefore hazardous to human health as well as wildlife; and

WHEREAS, the DEC has acknowledged the potential for negative impacts of hydrofracking with its determination that individual environmental assessments will be required for wells drilled within the New York City and Syracuse watersheds; and

WHEREAS, the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) has acknowledged that a cumulative impact study of the effects of hydrofracking on the area waters under its protection must be done; and

WHEREAS, it is a fact that the Catskills and Delaware River Basin supply drinking water to over 15 million people and that the overall amount of water on our planet has remained the same since the earth was formed and that each hydraulically fractured gas well requires up to 7 million gallons of water to frack which poses a serious and permanent threat to our ecosystem; and

WHEREAS, the potential for contamination of private (and, hence, unfiltered) and public water supplies as well as the potential water quality impacts from the migration of chemicals, and improper discharge of wastewater directly into the watersheds that are the source of drinking water for millions of people downstream, are cause for deep concern; and

WHEREAS, the constituents of the flowback from the hydrofracking operations may be unsuitable and unsafe for disposal at any New York State treatment plant, resulting in potential holding ponds of toxic waste or, if stored in containers, enabling those toxic substances to be vented into the atmosphere; and

WHEREAS, frequent and heavy truck traffic from hydrofracking operations may cause significant damage to local roads and infrastructure and adversely affect air quality; and

WHEREAS, the potential damage to local landscapes and wildlife is incalculable; and

WHEREAS, the value of residential properties is likely to decline significantly upon the commencement of gas drilling and the resulting industrialization of our region; and

WHEREAS, HUD, FHA and many banks refuse to finance mortgages or loans secured by property with or near gas drilling activity given the potential hazards and such refusals will adversely affect real estate transactions; and

WHEREAS, gas drilling and the resulting industrialization of Sullivan County will lead to significant declines in tourism and the second home market which are important economic sectors in our region; and

WHEREAS, the possible contamination of farmers' land, livestock and other foodshed products will cause irreparable harm to the agriculture industry in our county; and

WHEREAS, as existing economic impact studies with respect to hydrofracking are biased, dated, flawed or inapplicable to our region, there is an urgent need for independent and thorough analyses of the economic impact for New York State which take into account anticipated declines in tourism, the second home market, and agricultural products, increased usage of emergency responders, negative health impacts on residents, reduced property taxes based on declining property values, and other likely costs that will be borne by residents and municipalities; and

WHEREAS, the New York State Environmental Conservation Law has been interpreted by many to preempt local regulation of the gas and solution mining industries, thereby precluding Sullivan County or any other municipality from protecting its residents from the impacts of gas and oil drilling operations, including even the siting of such industrial operations, and undermining all town planning; and

WHEREAS, the environmental engineering report of Hazen and Sawyer, which is one of only two independent, non-industry financed studies to evaluate hydrofracking in the Marcellus Shale, identifies numerous risks of this activity to our region; and

WHEREAS, the comments of New York City's Watershed Inspector General, a joint appointment of the Attorney General and the Governor, supported by technical analysis by an independent consulting firm experienced in preparing environmental impact statements concerning oil and gas development (Arcadis Report), on the draft SGEIS report many, potentially catastrophic omissions including, but not limited to, the following: that the draft SGEIS fails to address cumulative impacts, that Reasonable Foreseeable Development scenarios are feasible and must be included and currently are not, that meaningful alternative consideration to the proposed action be considered such as prohibition of gas drilling in sensitive areas, and further, the WIG recommends that scientific studies or scientific literature substantiate the draft SGEIS conclusions which currently it does not; and

WHEREAS, further investigations of these issues are commencing or likely to commence in the near future, including a study of the full life-cycle emissions of shale gas, the social and economic costs and benefits of the industry, the Federal EPA's study of the potential impacts of hydrofracking on drinking water and public health, and a possible federally funded study by the United States Geological Survey of the cumulative impacts on water withdrawals for hydrofracking within the Delaware River Basin; and

WHEREAS, it is critical to secure the conclusions and recommendations of such scientific and economic assessments of hydrofracking prior to permitting this potentially harmful industrial activity within our county; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the undersigned Sullivan County and Upper Delaware River Basin citizens' groups hereby request that the State of New York impose a moratorium on hydrofracking operations pending such further independent scientific and economic assessments; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the undersigned Sullivan County and Upper Delaware River Basin citizens' groups hereby further request that the Honorable David A. Paterson, Governor, withdraw from SEQRA review the draft SGEIS pending such further assessments and to determine the aggregate protection provided therein with respect to the public health, environment and economy of New York State; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the undersigned Sullivan County and Upper Delaware River Basin citizens' groups strongly urge the New York State Legislature to pass a bill imposing a moratorium on hydrofracking prior to the end of the current session; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the undersigned Sullivan County and Upper Delaware River Basin citizens' groups strongly urge Andrew Cuomo, Democratic Party candidate for Governor of New York, to express his support for a moratorium on hydrofracking in the State of New York pending further independent scientific assessments, including the EPA study, and the social and economic impacts associated with such drilling; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that a representative of the undersigned Sullivan County and Upper Delaware River Basin citizens' groups is hereby directed to transmit a copy of this Resolution to the New York State Governor, the Speaker of the New York State Assembly, the President Pro Tempore of the New York State Senate, and to Attorney General Andrew Cuomo.

Catskill Citizens for Safe Energy

Catskill Mountainkeeper

Damascus Citizens for Sustainability

Keep Cochecton Green

Sullivan Area Citizens for Responsible Energy Development

