



ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATIVE NEWS

ULSTER COUNTY NEWS INFORMATION
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Ulster County Legislature Passes First Ban On Fracking

At Tuesday night's Ulster County Legislature meeting, a resolution to ban hydraulic fracturing or fracking was passed unanimously in a bipartisan vote. The Ulster County ban prohibits the leasing of county land for fracking. Ulster County has both the Marcellus and Utica shale formations that the gas industry is interested in fracking.

"I support having a ban on this method of gas extraction. We don't have enough information and there are too many unanswered questions. It is my understanding that there are 500-1,000 truck trips per hydro fracked well, which is more than our County roads can handle. The Ulster County Legislature must protect the people of this County and by our actions on this resolution; we did just that," stated Chairman Frederick J. Wadnola.

The Ulster County fracking ban follows similar bans in Onondaga, Sullivan and Tompkins County as well as a citywide ban on fracking in Buffalo, New York. Many local ban ordinances are being passed across New York State. Local chambers of commerce, businesses and civic organizations have all steadily been calling for both local and a statewide ban.

Legislator Susan Zimet, who introduced the legislation said, "I am so proud of the Ulster County Legislature for unanimously supporting this ban on County property. Every Legislator, Democrat and Republican showed a deep concern for our health, environment and quality of life we have here in Ulster County. One just needs to travel to Pennsylvania to see the destruction hydro-fracking has done to our neighboring State. This is just the first step in protecting our homes, health, economy and environment of a County we all love."

Hydraulic fracturing or "fracking" is a method of gas extraction that involves injecting millions of gallons of water and undisclosed toxic chemicals deep into the ground to break up rock formations and release methane gas deposits. The practice is alleged to have caused over 1,000 incidents of water contamination—including many well-publicized cases where water can be ignited right out of the tap due to high levels of gas. Hydraulic fracturing is exempt from all federal environmental legislation and Environmental Protection Agency oversight, due to loopholes in federal environmental laws including the "Halliburton Loophole" which specifically exempts hydraulic fracturing from the Safe Drinking Water Act.

The issue has received new public scrutiny in recent weeks after an investigation by *The New York Times* found that fracking wastewater from the Marcellus Shale is radioactive and being discharged through municipal sewage treatment plants into drinking water supplies.