

GAS DRILLING IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD: THE IMPACTS ON YOU AND YOUR FAMILY.

While the gas-drilling “gold-rush” has made the news recently, most people who don’t own leasable amounts of land have gotten the impression that they “don’t have a dog in this race”. In fact, **people living downhill and downstream from gas-drilling activity will bear the impacts of that activity even though they will not share in the financial advantages.**

Most people in Central New York live in villages and cities that are in valleys where air pollution settles, get their water from aquifers overlaying the well bores, and seek refuge from time-to-time amid natural places like parks and countryside. Others live on small plots along town roads because they value the relative quiet, privacy and fresh air such locations provide. All these people ought to be up to speed about the impacts minimally-regulated gas drilling will have on their lives so that they can take precautions and work with their neighbors to control/minimize the impacts on their families and their communities. They should know that

- Gas-well drilling, carried out 24/7 over the course of three months per well, will soon build to **very high levels of noise** (83 decibels, or the volume of a subway at 200’) that will continue until all the wells in one’s neighborhood have been drilled.
- The five-acre drill sites, currently on 25-acre spacings, require constant treatment with toxic **herbicides for weed control**
- Drilling “muds” that provide lubrication and other services to the well-boring process contain biocides, oil-based lubricants, and other **additives whose use is no longer regulated by the Environmental Protection Agency** can remain on-site, subject to being carried downhill by rainfall, wind, and erosion
- Horizontally-drilled wells are then “fractured”. The “fracturing” uses extreme pressure to force up to 3 million gallons of fluid (including diesel fuels, heavy metals, and other toxics) to break up the shale rock and let the gas flow to the wellhead. The gas industry is the only one which is **exempt from the terms of the Safe Water Drinking Act**, which forbids the unregulated injection of poisons into the ground.
- Both drilling and fracturing involves the use of lots and lots of diesel-driven, truck-mounted compressors that generate (besides noise) levels of nitrous oxide (ozone/smog precursor), benzene, aromatic hydrocarbons, particulate matter, sulfur dioxide, and volatile compounds that cause and aggravate asthma, cardio problems, and cancer. These **airborne substances migrate downhill** to the villages and cities along our river valley
- Initial and repeat fracturing of drill bores also takes millions upon millions of gallons of additive-laced water per wellbore. About 40% of this remains underground, where it will always pose a

-

potential threat to underground water. The other 60% is returned to the surface along with other substances previously held in the shale layer being fractured. This returned water is pumped into earth-bermed evaporation ponds lined with uncemented plastic sheets. After completion of the well, the sludges left behind may simply be bulldozed, providing an eternal supply of toxic substances to threaten soils, air and water. The billions of gallons of water these drilling muds and fracking liquids require can legally be taken from public watercourses, including , as in an early case in Chenango County, privately-owned lakes and wetlands which water-haulers can access from public roads, with the blessing of the DEC. These water withdrawals have already resulted in effects on wildlife.

- Venting and flaring of **impure gases liberated by the drilling process is likewise not inspected/regulated** by any level of government. They include known carcinogens, explosives, hydrogen sulfide, heavy metals, sulfurous and nitrous oxides.
- The water-needs alone for the drilling and initial fracking *of each well* will involve **hundreds of 10,000 gallon capacity tanker trucks** carrying water in to each wellhead, and removing (in some cases) the untreated return liquids to disposal facilities. They will be competing for road space with school buses, snowplows, and emergency vehicles. They will be idling at the drill sites, where they withdraw water, and where they wait for access to the wellhead.

THE IMPACTS ON YOUR COMMUNITY

- The industry will be buying water from municipal water systems, as it sought in Otsego County. **But it will also be taking water from any public bodies of water, including wetlands, they can access from the road.** In Chenango County , a privately-owned wetland was tapped.
 - It is already using **local water-treatment plants, often near capacity**, especially in Chenango County.
 - It will increase demands on **local medical services**, due to the severity of jobsite injuries.
 - Local **ambulance and emergency services**, already stretched to the breaking point, will have to respond to accidents involving accidental amputations and mutilations, and radioactive elements concentrating on, and scraped off of, drilling equipment,.
 - Local fire departments used to responding to house and brush fires will have to deal with **chemical fires and gas eruptions** for which they will be unprepared
 - Town government's biggest budget item is its road/highway department. Gas drilling affects town and county roads because **truck traffic** carrying 800,000 to 4 million gallons of water per drilling, and again per fracking, wears out roads.
 - There is the additional **use of schools** for families of drilling workers and the impact of increased demand for rental housing which drives up the price for local renters.
-
- *Please see for a range of topics relating gas-drilling to your health at www.ogap.org*
 - *Read the news on gas drilling at www.chenangogreens.org*
 - *Join the discussion group at marcellusgasinfo-subscribe@googlegroups.com*