

Facilities and Infrastructure Committee
Special Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, October 19, 2010 5:00 PM
Tompkins County Courthouse

Accepted 1-7-11

Attendee Name	Title	Status
Dooley Kiefer	Chair	Present
Michael Lane	Member	Present
Pamela Mackesey	Member	Present
Leslyn McBean-Clairborne	Member	Present
David McKenna	Member	Present

Staff: E. Marx, Commissioner of Planning and Public Works; C. Covert, Clerk of the Legislature
Guest: C. Chock

Call to Order

Chair Kiefer called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.

Resolution

Resolution (DOC ID: 2229): Resolution Prohibiting Leasing of County-Owned Land for Natural Gas Drilling Using High Volume Hydro-Fracturing

Mr. Lane expressed concern with the language indicating science has stated natural gas is a “dirtier” fuel than coal. Ms. Chock said she has heard Mr. Stein say the science has rejected that idea, but “science” has not weighed in on whether coal is dirtier than natural gas when considering the full life cycle. Ms. Kiefer said that science has not rejected the theory. Mr. Marx said evidence is mounting toward that belief.

RESULT:	RECOMMENDED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Michael Lane, Member
SECONDER:	Pamela Mackesey, Member
AYES:	Kiefer, Lane, Mackesey, McBean-Clairborne, McKenna

WHEREAS, it is increasingly clear that drilling for natural gas using high-volume slick-water hydraulic-fracturing (hydro-fracking) may have severe adverse impacts on communities and the environment, and

WHEREAS, evidence is mounting that life cycle greenhouse gas emissions from natural gas extracted using high-volume hydro-fracturing is likely equivalent to the emissions from coal, and

WHEREAS, the Tompkins County government, as well as the overall community, has established a goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 80% by 2050, a goal that would be impossible to meet if natural gas drilling occurred on county-owned land, and

WHEREAS, the Tompkins County Energy and Greenhouse Gas Emission component of the Tompkins County Comprehensive Plan concluded that increased energy conservation and use of renewable energy are important ways to avert the most catastrophic impacts of climate change, and

WHEREAS, Tompkins County further believes that development of the Marcellus Shale will likely have a net adverse impact on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and

WHEREAS, with respect to the 556 acres of County forest land, the Tompkins County Forest Management Plan specifically states that “drilling sites and pipeline corridors that permanently alter the character of the land would not be compatible with the goals outlined in this Plan,” and

WHEREAS, the activity of drilling for and transporting natural gas, with the attendant well pads, roads, pipelines, and ancillary facilities, will fragment our forest lands in ways that damage their values including threatening water resources, creating edges that impair habitat value for forest-dwelling species, removing natural vegetation cover, and allowing invasive species to become established, and

WHEREAS, such activity would undoubtedly place added stress on species that may increasingly come under stress from the impacts of climate change, and

WHEREAS, rather than allowing fragmentation of County-owned lands and forests we should be increasing our acreage of unbroken forest lands off limits to drilling to provide mitigation for the increasing fragmentation of private forest lands, and

WHEREAS, County-owned forest lands are located in rural areas where roads, other infrastructure, and emergency response capabilities are ill suited to accommodating the level of impact on infrastructure and demand for services resulting from the industrial activity associated with high volume hydro-fracturing, and

WHEREAS, it is clear that from a long-term environmental, economic, and social perspective the value of our county-owned lands will be much greater if left unimpaired by the impacts of gas drilling than if such drilling is allowed to occur, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Planning, Development and Environmental Quality Committee and the Facilities and Infrastructure Committee, That Tompkins County will not lease any county-owned lands, including but not limited to County forest lands, for high volume hydro-fracturing to extract natural gas,

RESOLVED, further, That the Clerk of the Tompkins County Legislature is hereby directed to forward copies of this resolution to Governor David Paterson, Senate Majority Conference Leader John Sampson, Senate Minority Leader Dean Skelos, Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, Assembly Majority Leader Ron Canestrari, Assembly Minority Leader Brian Kolb, Senator James Seward (51st District), Senator George Winner (53rd District), Senator Michael Nozzolio (54th District), Assemblywoman Barbara Lifton (125th district), and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Commissioner Pete Grannis.

SEQR ACTION: TYPE II-20

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Adjournment

On motion, the meeting adjourned at 5:08 p.m.