



Tompkins County Water Resources Council

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For Submission at the Binghamton, New York Hearing on 8/12

Mr. Edward Hanlon, Designated Federal Officer
EPA Science Advisory Board (1400F)
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington DC 20420

Re: EPA Hydraulic Fracturing Research Study

One of the most pressing concerns associated with well drilling and hydraulic fracturing for natural shale-gas extraction is the appropriate regulation and enforcement of water withdrawal from surface and groundwater sources. In New York State, water withdrawal regulations differ among the major surface-water basins. Withdrawals are regulated in the Susquehanna River basin by the Susquehanna River Basin Commission, in the Delaware River basin by the Delaware River Basin Commission - whereas withdrawal regulations in the Great Lakes and Saint Lawrence River basins are set by the International Joint Commission. In other drainages, such as the Allegheny River and the Hudson River basins, withdrawal regulations are set by New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. These regulatory authorities differ widely in their administration, enforcement, and policies such as extractable volumes, seasonality of extraction, and inter-basin transfers of water.

The effects of water withdrawals and discharges may not fully consider downstream users such as water withdrawals for public-drinking water supplies, nor are downstream ecologies fully considered, such as fishery habitats. Also, inter-basin transfers of water by individual truckload may not be regulated, although considerable volumes may be cumulatively moved from one basin to another.

In view of the large volumes of fresh water that may be withdrawn by gas industry activities in New York, a review of the regulations that affect water extractions is warranted. Ancillary issues for consideration include a current lack of adequate coordination among the regulatory authorities, the inconsistency of regulations among basins, and problems of regulatory enforcement.

Sincerely,

Frank P. Proto, Chairman
Tompkins County Water Resources Council