TOMPKINS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Your Partner for a Healthy Community

Environmental Health Division
55 Brown Road, Ithaca, NY 14850
(607) 274-6688; Fax (607) 274-6695

Resolution Regarding County Health Department Activities Associated with Gas Drilling in the Marcellus Shale, Utica Shale and Other Low-Permeability Gas Reservoirs in New York State

Whereas, there is significant public concern about potential environmental and human health impacts associated with natural gas drilling in the Marcellus Shale, Utica Shale, and other low-permeability gas reservoirs; **and**

Whereas, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) released a revised draft Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement (SGEIS) concerning natural gas drilling in these formations; **and**

Whereas, Chapter 6 of the draft SGEIS addresses potential impacts and Chapter 7 addresses potential mitigation measures that may affect public health including private and public water supplies, noise, air pollution, emergencies, and socioeconomic impacts; **and**

Whereas, Section 7 of the draft SGEIS requires testing of water supply wells near natural gas wells and identifies county health departments as having primary responsibility for investigating complaints and determining whether contamination is related to gas drilling; **and**

Whereas, the Environmental Health and Public Health professionals in New York State county health departments have responsibility at a local level for ensuring the safety of drinking water supplies and responding to a broad range of public health impacts, emergencies, nuisance complaints, including air and water contamination, chemical spills, and radiation hazards; **and**

Whereas, local health departments are the primary point of contact for members of the public that may have a health-related impact or nuisance impact caused by a gas drilling activity; **and**

Whereas, county health departments will experience a substantial increase in workload in connection with gas drilling activities, requiring the addition of an estimated 1 to 2 full-time qualified staff to each county; **and**

Whereas, without additional financial support, the workload from these impacts will be a new unfunded mandate from the State in fiscally difficult times; **and**

Whereas, funding needed to support appropriate multiple-agency oversight can and should be derived from the companies drilling for gas and not be a burden borne by county and state taxpayers; **and**

Whereas, NYSDEC Commissioner Martens established a High-Volume Hydraulic Fracturing Advisory Panel to consider these issues and this panel does not have representatives from county health departments; and

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Whereas, the New York State Department of Health presented resource needs to the Advisory Panel which did not include the needs of county health departments.

Now therefore be it:

1. **RESOLVED,** that the Tompkins County Board of Health requests that representatives from local health departments be directly involved in determining procedures, processes, and funding requirements for those aspects of gas drilling oversight that affect county health departments; **and**

2. **RESOLVED,** that the Tompkins County Board of Health requests that NYSDEC Commissioner Martens require the High-Volume Hydraulic Fracturing Advisory Panel to obtain input directly from county health departments concerning potential impacts and resource needs for gas drilling oversight that affect county health departments; **and**

3. **RESOLVED,** that the Tompkins County Board of Health requests that the Governor and the New York State Legislature establish financial resources to cover the entire on-going cost of public health oversight and a contract or other mechanism to transfer needed funds to county health departments; **and**

4. **RESOLVED,** that the Tompkins County Board of Health requests that the Governor direct NYSDEC Commissioner Martens to negotiate procedures and a formal agreement such as a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between NYSDEC and involved county health departments which adequately outlines the roles and responsibilities of both NYSDEC and county health departments in the investigation and resolution of complaints related to gas drilling and impacts to water resources and public and private drinking water supplies; **and**

5. **RESOLVED,** that the Tompkins County Board of Health requests that the aforementioned requests be completed prior to permitting of gas wells in the Marcellus Shale or other low-permeability formations; **and**

6. **RESOLVED,** that a copy of this resolution shall be sent to those parties indicated in Attachment A.

SEQR ACTION: TYPE II

This resolution was adopted by the Tompkins County Board of Health at its regular meeting on November 8, 2011.

Brenda L. Gunnell Crosby
for Frank Kruppa
Public Health Director

11/10/11
Date

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Attachment A
Tompkins County Board of Health Gas Drilling Resolution Distribution List

Hard copies to:
Governor Cuomo
NYS Senators Skelos, Brian Kolb, O'Mara, Seward, and Nozzolio
Speaker Silver
Assemblywoman Lifton
Chair of Senate Committee on Environmental Conservation Grisanti
Chair of Senate Committee on Local Governments (via Andrea Stewart-Cousins)
Chair of Senate Committee on Health (via Thomas Duane)
Chair of Assembly Committee on Environmental Conservation Sweeney
Chair of Assembly Committee on Health (via Robert Gottfried)
Chair of Assembly Committee on Local Government (via Sam Hoyt)
Chair of Assembly Committee on NYSDEC Oversight (via Adam Bradley)
New York State Association of Counties

Electronic copies to:
New York State Association of State County Health Officials (NYSACHO)
NYS Conference of Environmental Health Directors
Tompkins County Planning
Tompkins County Water Resources Council
Tompkins County Environmental Management Council (EMC)
Tompkins County Council of Governments (TCCOG)
Tompkins County Soil and Water Conservation District (TCSWCD)
Southern Cayuga Lake Intermunicipal Water Commission (SCLIWC - Bolton Point)
Ithaca Journal
Ithaca Times
Tompkins County Legislature
City of Ithaca Mayor Peterson