

ADOPTED

Resolution No. 2010-164

Resolution in Opposition to Drilling for Natural Gas on State Forest Lands

WHEREAS, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) has developed a draft Strategic Plan for State Forest Management to guide the management of the 780,000 acres of State forest lands in New York State, and

WHEREAS, the NYSDEC is soliciting public comment on that plan, and

WHEREAS, the industrial scale of hydro-fracturing operations is incompatible with the purposes of and values provided by our State forest lands, 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 State forests we should be increasing our acreage of unbroken State forest lands off limits to drilling to provide mitigation for the increasing fragmentation of private forest lands, and

WHEREAS, as climate change occurs the State forest lands will become increasingly important as routes of migration for those species that cannot adapt to that climate change and must move north or to higher elevation to survive, and that the fragmentation and other impacts from drilling will impair the ability of the State forest lands to perform that function, and

WHEREAS, our State forests are increasingly used for all types of outdoor recreation activities and gas drilling will impair if not irreparably damage the value of this recreational resource, and

WHEREAS, outdoor recreation provided by the State forest lands is a valued and recognized component of our tourism economy with much potential for future growth, and

WHEREAS, most State 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 State forest 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, That the Tompkins County Legislature urges the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to modify the State Forest Management Plan to prohibit drilling for natural gas on State forest land using high-volume hydro-fracturing, and to specifically recognize the important

