



CITY OF NEW YORK

**MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR**

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**JEAN-DANIEL NOLAND**  
Chair

**ROBERT J. BENFATTO, JR., ESQ.**  
District Manager

May 14, 2009

Hon David Paterson  
Governor of the State of New York  
Executive Chamber  
Albany, New York 12224

Hon Pete Grannis  
Commissioner  
New York State Department of Environmental Conservation  
625 Broadway  
Albany, NY 12233-1011

**Re: Hydraulic fracturing gas drilling in the watershed area**

Dear Governor Paterson and Commissioner Grannis:

It has come to the attention of Manhattan Community Board No 4, located in New York City, that a proposal to extract natural gas from large areas in New York State known as the Marcellus Shale region using a method called "hydraulic fracturing" is being considered by New York State and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC). As the area encompasses the watershed area that provides most of New York City's drinking water supply, this proposal is of grave concern for the residents of Manhattan Community District No 4, not to mention the entire population of New York City. Evidence that has been presented to this board from several sources, including reports from other states where this method has been used, indicate that there are many potential dangers associated with the hydraulic fracturing method of extracting natural gas, and we strongly urge you, in your respective roles as Governor of New York and Commissioner of NYS DEC, to prohibit any such drilling operations using hydraulic fracturing in or near the watershed areas that supply our drinking water, as well as other areas in New York State, until and/or unless certain actions or conditions, outlined below, have been met to ensure public safety.

- Public hearing in NYC
- Independent safety study
- Knowledge of chemicals used

Public hearing in NYC

First of all, we understand that NYS DEC held public scoping hearings in upstate New York for a Draft Supplemental Generic EIS regarding this methodology, but did not hold any hearings in New York City, despite the fact that 90% of our drinking water comes from watersheds that are adjacent to, or encompassed by the Marcellus Shale area where this proposed drilling is to take place. Our understanding of this method is that huge volumes of water mixed with sand and chemicals, some of which are known to be carcinogenic, are pumped into the earth to create fractures that allow the release of the natural gas, and that this creates a tremendous run-off of contaminated waste water. Since this has the potential to affect our drinking water, it is clear that residents of New York City need an opportunity to understand the risks and the possible consequences better, and that, therefore, it is imperative that NYS DEC schedule similar hearings on the Draft Supplemental Generic EIS in New York City, and extend the public comment period appropriately, before any conclusions are reached.

### Independent safety study

It is our understanding that no independent studies of the potential for contamination, the effectiveness of any filtering, or other side effects of this methodology have been conducted by New York State. At the same time, evidence from other states where this type of drilling has been implemented indicates that problems can be expected. Manhattan Community Board No 4 strongly urges NYS DEC to implement a series of such studies using independent accredited institutions before any permits for this type of drilling are approved, especially in the watershed that supplies NYC. It is also unknown how far underground contaminated water may travel, and thus it is impossible to determine with accuracy how much of a buffer zone might be needed to protect our drinking water supply.

### Knowledge of chemicals used

We understand that more than 240 chemicals are used in this process, of which 90% are considered toxic, and that the mix is considered to be a proprietary "trade secret" by the manufacturers. Clearly, when public safety is involved, there must be disclosure of the chemicals used, and we call on NYS DEC and the Governor's office to insist that a complete list of the chemicals involved be made available to the public, and thus available to such testing organizations as may be employed, as recommended above, before any permits are granted.

### Conclusion

Manhattan Community Board No 4 understands the environmental benefits of the use of natural gas for energy needs, as opposed to burning oil or coal. We also understand the need for New York State to be able to benefit from the revenues from the mining of natural gas, especially in these difficult economic times. However, we strongly believe that the potential for serious harm to public health, especially to our drinking water supply, needs to be weighed carefully, and studied thoroughly, and the dangers better understood, before any decisions to use hydraulic fracturing drilling are made in New York State.

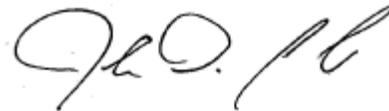
Sincerely,



Jean-Daniel Noland, Chair Manhattan Community Board 4



Capt. John Doswell, Co-Chair  
Waterfronts & Parks Committee



John D. Lamb, Co-Chair  
Waterfront & Parks Committee

c.c.

New York Senator Frank Padavan  
Joe Levine, NY-H20  
Speaker Christine Quinn  
Borough President Scott Stringer  
Assembly member Richard Gottfried  
Senator Thomas Duane  
Council member Gale Brewer