

PUBLIC FORUM ON GAS DRILLING
Otsego County, New York
Wednesday, July 21, 2010

Chairman Dubben welcomed everyone to the public forum. He asked that all speakers state their name, limit their comments to three minutes and respect the other speakers. All the representatives introduced themselves with the following representatives being present: Powers, Clark, Fournier, Lindberg, Dubben, McCarty, Schwerd, Rothenberger, Rowinski, Stuligross.

Otto Butz stated that the drilling on Crumhorn Mountain has disrupted the neighborhood. He urged the County Board to vote for a two year moratorium on gas drilling to have a chance to look things over.

Susan Dorsey stated that she is concerned the gas drilling will threaten the current way of life in the county. Gas drilling will attract land speculators, which will cause land values, assessments and taxes to increase. It will be an unbearable burden for those on a fixed income.

Lou Allstadt from Cooperstown is a former executive with Mobile Oil. He stated that originally he thought hydrofracking could be done safely, but is now convinced otherwise. He believes the current system is broken. A new system is needed that includes two separate agencies, one to regulate and one to collect the revenues, and increased local home rule with a bigger role in the drilling process. Mr. Allstadt asked the County Board to stop and review the issue more thoroughly.

Bronka Anelreic from Westford stated that it is extremely important to protect our resources, such as clean water and air. She does not want to see drilling because of the potential catastrophic consequences. Ms. Anelreic feels that the people should decide the issue on the November ballot and not the gas industry.

Nicole Dillingham representing Otsego 2000 asked the County Board for assistance in delaying the process so that all the gas drilling issues are researched and resolved and for the county to prepare emergency plans in case of an accident. Neither the state nor the county is prepared to deal with the risks.

Adrian Kuzminski representing Sustainable Otsego stated that natural gas is a roadblock to a future of renewable energies and we should say no to additional oil and gas extraction. He asked the County Board to support a statewide moratorium on gas drilling and to call for the withdrawal of the NYSDEC's dSGEIS on gas drilling as flawed, inadequate and impossible to enforce.

James Herman from Hartwick stated that the revenues from gas drilling will be outweighed by the huge costs. It is not compatible with agriculture, recreation and tourism and will increase the demands on our infrastructure, administration, healthcare, housing and emergency services personnel. Mr. Herman called for a ban on gas drilling in New York State.

Beth Rosenthal from Roseboom stated that the Gas Drilling Advisory Board should be getting people prepared for gas drilling. The NYSDEC is not up to protect our environment. Pandora's Box is being opened. To prevent the negative impacts to our land and quality of life, gas drilling must be stopped now.

Stephen Green from Milford stated that he is concerned that several people and animals became ill after the gas well was drilled on Crumhorn Mountain. He said that gas drilling is a political issue and implored the County Board to stop gas drilling.

Rebecca Burk-Sciallo from Springfield Center stated that she is afraid about the possible consequences from gas drilling. The land is an extension of her family, and she would be angry if something bad happened from gas drilling. She said that gas drilling has

a bad track record. There will be a lot of finger pointing if something happens. Ms. Burk-Sciallo wants to see the middle finger pointed in the air at gas drilling.

Colleen Blacklock from Oneonta asked how many of the 61,000 people in Otsego County will benefit from the gas leases because the rest will inherit a ruined landscape. She raised numerous questions, such as who will prevent contamination to the lakes and aquifers. Mrs. Blacklock asked that any County Board member who has signed a gas lease to recuse himself or herself from making decisions on the matter and asked for assurances that the County Board would protect the citizens from the gas companies.

Doris Moennich a farmer from Gilbertsville stated that she is in support of safe drilling. She said that without the income from gas drilling farmers will go out of business.

Mary Dulkis from Crumhorn Mountain stated that she supports safe drilling.

Steven Sinniger a former farmer from Otsego stated that people are concerned about air and water quality, but we already have air and water pollution problems. He said that maybe people should stop using cars and go back to using horses and buggies. Mr. Sinniger asked where we will get energy in the future. The issue has to be looked at from all angles.

Eleanor MacDougall from Cooperstown stated that the EPA study is evaluating the entire drilling situation to allow for safer drilling. She supports a two year moratorium on drilling to enable a scientific agency to properly study the situation.

Dan Twomey from Worcester stated that he has observed that the County Board is not well informed on the issue. He feels that if the County Board looks carefully at both sides, it will see that gas drilling is not the right thing to do.

James Northrup from Cooperstown worked for drilling companies all over the world. He stated that there is nothing wrong with horizontal hydrofracking. The problem is that New York State regulations are based on antiquated technology. Mr. Northrup said that the County Board has to demand that the state update its regulations for today's technology and issues.

Sean Campbell from the Central New York Landowners Coalition stated that the coalition represents thousands of acres. He said that the NYSDEC should be allowed to do its work. They are the professionals.

Kimberly More from Goodyear Lake stated that there has been plenty of opportunity for people to comment on DEC's dSGEIS and to hold discussions. There are EPA regulations in place to protect our clean water. She said that she loves her land, but will lose it if gas drilling is not allowed. Farmers cannot wait another day. Ms. More added that the landowners coalition members have committed to put 10% of the revenues from drilling into an account for the community's benefit. She asked the County Board to look at the facts. Water can be kept safe.

Teresa Winchester from Butternuts stated that she did not panic about hydrofracking until she visited Dimock, Pennsylvania and saw the problems that have occurred, such as water wells being polluted. She is concerned that drilling on her neighbors' properties could pollute her well. Local environmental agencies have commented on the potential problems.

Ms. Winchester said that there are too many catastrophic issues to allow high volume hydrofracking in New York State.

Larry Peloso from Unadilla asked the County Board to listen to all the studies and wait for the NYSDEC to come forth with its findings. The new DEC regulations will speak for themselves. Scare tactics is not the way to do business. We need economic stimulation and not hysterics.

Dick Downey from Otego stated that the issue is all about water and whether it will be contaminated by drilling. Over the last 60 years a million wells have been hydrofracked and created 35,000 jobs per month. He said that during that time the EPA, state regulators and leading academics have all agreed that frac fluid has not migrated into the aquifers and

surface water. The average yearly spill count is nine. There are risks, but there is also a potential for creating more jobs in the state. Mr. Downey noted that the NYSDEC is doing its job by reviewing the issue, taking comments and looking at the best practices in other states. He said to respect the process and let the facts prevail and not support a moratorium on drilling.

Steve Barton, a farmer from Schenevus, stated that in the last five years he has investigated two renewable energy projects for his farm. The first project was not approved for funding, and the second project had a 53 year payback period. Mr. Barton said that he is a strong supporter of alternative energy sources, but we are not there yet. Our country needs energy independence. He asked the County Board to adopt three resolutions: 1) require that all drilling in the county be done using a closed loop system, 2) require horizontal well drilling to the maximum extent practicable to decrease the need for many vertical wells, and 3) require well casing be used all the way down.

Connie Lull from Westford stated that the theme tonight is perception. Some people believe that the Ross well on Crumhorn Mountain killed some horses. However, other people have animals close to the well, which were not affected. She said that there is a great deal of fear about gas drilling. The United States has the largest gas reserve in the world. We have to be responsible for using the resources at our disposal instead of relying on other countries.

Doug Lull, a farmer from Westford, stated that farming is not sustainable in Otsego County. Farmers need to have access to their mineral rights. Gas drilling will create jobs in the county.

Tom Pritchard from Hartwick stated that there are a lot of people in opposition in the county over the gas drilling issue. Some people are concerned about keeping their property, and others are concerned about problems that could happen. In real life environmental problems occur. The NYSDEC is understaffed and will be unable to monitor the drilling. Mr. Pritchard asked the County Board to carefully assess the situation and not let gas drilling occur in Otsego County. Once our water supply is ruined, we cannot go back.

Carol Ralbeg from Butternuts stated that gas drilling will not be allowed in the Syracuse and New York City watersheds and asked what these officials know that we do not.

Flo Clapper from Cherry Valley stated that she is on the fence. She has signed a gas lease, but is now scared about the consequences of gas drilling. Ms. Clapper wants government to enact regulations to make drilling safe and to protect the people. We have to make the gas companies follow proper procedures.

Carolee Byrnes from Otego stated that gas drilling will not bring economic prosperity to the county. Instead, it will create water and air pollution, noise, higher property taxes, ruined agricultural land and health issues. She said that a gas lease will not protect us. The gas companies will walk all over us with their financial resources. Ms. Byrnes asked the County Board for a moratorium on gas drilling in Otsego County.

Robert Eklund from New Lisbon stated that two years ago the county was asked for help with road preservation issues. At the time the county said it was too expensive, but now the county is issuing a Road Preservation Services RFP. The county has also stated that it has no money for projects, but recently found \$6,000,000. Mr. Eklund said that the people want assurances from the county and asked the County Board to examine all the issues.

Ben Gavett from Pittsfield stated that he was nervous about the environmental issues and environmental justice. He said that Americans consume much energy, but let others in the world produce it and deal with the problems. We feel that we are entitled to a certain standard of living. Mr. Gavett said that we need to listen to people who have issues

and data and come back together to figure out how to do gas drilling right.

Fred Johnson from Butternuts stated that the County Board has heard tonight why the county is not ready for hydrofracking. He suggested imposing a moratorium to study the issue further. The ultimate decision following the study may be to ban drilling in the county. Mr. Johnson said that County Board can do the right thing for most of the people by putting on hold on the process.

Mark Dye from Otego stated that Americans consume a lot of energy and produce almost nothing. Our kids are leaving Otsego County because there are no jobs here. He said that we cannot trust the gas companies, but we need them and should have more regulations in place, such as requiring a closed loop system. Otsego County needs something more realistic in place instead of just saying no.

Julie Huntsman, a veterinarian from Fly Creek, stated that she is hearing a lot from both sides of the issue and is afraid. She said that we need to listen to people with experience in the gas industry. She is not against gas drilling, if it can be done safely. Ms. Huntsman encouraged the County Board to move slowly and work locally with what it can, such as roads, to protect the people of the county.

Julie Solloway from Maryland stated that water is more valuable than gas. She said that she knows of eight wells that were contaminated by the Ross well on Crumhorn Mountain. She is unable to use her well for drinking, washing and cleaning. In addition, the Ross well has caused air pollution, increased traffic and noise, and an awful smell. Ms. Solloway added that she will never be able to use her water again because it has been poisoned.

Dave Parker from Worcester stated that hydrofracked wells are safer now. The technology has improved, and many of these wells are being processed. He believes that the EPA and DEC would have banned hydrofracking if it was so systemically dangerous. Mr. Parker added that a moratorium on gas drilling would be inherently discriminatory to those who want drilling on their land. It would be a loss of their rights.

Paul Mendelsohn from Cherry Valley stated that the local farmers are hurting. He hopes that they can cash in on drilling sooner than later. Mr. Mendelsohn said that there will be time in the future for drilling, but that time is not here yet because DEC's dSGEIS is inadequate and there is no place to dispose of the toxic waste generated from drilling.

Kristina Turechek from Laurens stated that she is afraid of gas drilling and the fact that town boards and the County Board are saying that they cannot do anything about drilling. She said that if local boards do not have the power to do anything, then maybe they need to get home rule expanded to give them more authority.

Dennis Turechek from Laurens stated that after listening to everyone tonight he has been trying to think of something that everyone can agree on. He said that the only thing he came up with is that everyone drinks water.

Clark Rhoades from Worcester stated that he used to support gas drilling, but now is in favor of a moratorium. He said that if we wait to drill, the value of the mineral rights will increase. The moratorium will also give the NYSDEC time to wait for the EPA study to be concluded since the NYSDEC does not have the people to study the issue. Mr. Rhoades stated that everyone wins with a moratorium.

Nancy Moen from Mount Vision stated that her neighbor has signed a gas lease. If drilling occurs, there will be problems with light and noise, more traffic on her road, potential spills and the polluting of drinking wells. She is concerned that if she tries to sell her property now, she may not be able to get a buyer for her house. Mrs. Moen stated that she is sympathetic to the local farmers, but does not believe that gas drilling is the answer. She requested the County Board to adopt a resolution banning hydrofracking for further study, to hold another meeting with professionals present who can answer people's questions and to have County Board members who have signed a lease to recuse themselves on gas

drilling issues.

Marilyn Bradshaw from Cooperstown stated that she was dismayed at the level of emotion expressed by some people to others. She said that everyone needs to come to an understanding. Mrs. Bradshaw also said that County Board members need to further educate themselves and be confident in whatever it lets happen. The risks from gas drilling are so great that decisions must be thought through carefully. She requested support for a moratorium until the EPA study is completed and people can have confidence that drilling will be safe.

Ray Hertel from Laurens stated that he is against drilling. He is also mad at the state legislature for giving more protection to the Syracuse and New York City watersheds than to the rest of the state. Mr. Hertel asked the County Board to slow down gas drilling in the county.

Martha Frey from Middlefield stated that we need to ask the gas companies for safer procedures to deal with the large number of issues. She asked the County Board to support a countywide moratorium and to hire people to deal with the local issues, such as emergency plans, road reservation and water testing, so that taxpayers do not have to pay for future problems.

Dona Syman from Cooperstown stated that the anti-fracking people are not rich. She has three jobs and is against hydrofracking. Ms. Syman said that all the issues need to be looked at because the damage may not be able to be fixed. Water could become a scarcity and needs to be protected. She said that it is a sad day when a farmer has to choose a way that destroys the land.

David Grodsky from Pittsfield stated that drilling is a faulty process. There are many failures in drilling when going down. He asked if anyone believes that the gas companies will not cut corners during the drilling process. Mr. Grodsky said that many people are nervous. The NYSDEC is understaffed and will not be able to monitor and investigate the gas industry. He asked the County Board to take the people's fears into consideration and to protect the general welfare of everyone.

John Buchinger stated that he represents those individuals who left an urban area to live in a rural area. He said that he came to Otsego County because of its beauty, clean air and water, and quality of life. In order to remain a viable community, we must protect the land. Mr. Buchinger requested the County Board to support a countywide moratorium on hydrofracking.

Erica Yackel from Afton did not speak, but did present a letter stating that the country is in serious trouble. Taxes are getting higher, and the economy is horrible. Gas drilling would provide more jobs and reduce our country's dependence on oil from foreign countries, many that do not like us. She asked all the environmentalists to work with us to allow safe gas drilling.

There being no further persons who wished to speak, Chairman Dubben declared the public forum on gas drilling closed.