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Minimum Requirements for Protection of the Seneca Lake Watershed Proposed by Association

Fiscally and environmentally responsible drilling for natural gas requires the Governor and Legislature to act now.

Today the Seneca Lake Pure Waters Association (SLPWA) sent a letter to Governor David Patterson, Commissioner Peter Grannis and our area NYS and US representatives detailing regulatory requirements that it believes would meet the standards of fiscal and environmental responsibility by those drilling for natural gas in the state.

In its November 21, 2009 response to the NYS DEC Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement On The Oil, Gas and Solution Mining Regulatory Program (dSGEIS) issued on September 30, 2009, SLPWA stated its support for "fiscally and environmentally responsible drilling for natural gas" in New York State but noted that it opposes drilling under the vague guidelines described in the dSGEIS.

SLPWA outlined 9 areas of responsibility that the state needs to address in its regulatory role over the drilling process to insure environmental and fiscal integrity. The first of these is for the New York State Legislature and Governor to enact a New York State Water Resources Protection Act (NYWRPA) that reflects the State's continued commitment to water resource protection and can serve as a general directive to the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC).

In addition, the letter outlines requirements that: (1) allow municipal and/or town control over permitting, siting and certain construction and operational parameters in accordance with local land-use regulations, noise ordinances and other local laws; (2) mandate baseline water testing by the drilling companies of water sources that might be impacted by the drilling; (3) disclose publically complete information on the chemicals used in drilling operations; (4) fracturing fluids and wastewater from drilling are disposed of in compliance with the Federal Water Pollution Control Amendments of 1972, the Clean Water Act of 1977 and the Water Quality Act of 1987; (5) protection from uncontrolled releases of gas and fluids is provided; (6) full fiscal responsibility for environmental remediation be borne by the drilling company; (7) New York State residents not directly involved in the exploitation of the natural gas resources of the State and the attendant operations be "fiscally neutral" in their tax liabilities from costs caused by drilling; (8) NYS conduct a comprehensive analysis of statewide impacts of natural gas development before drilling is allowed.

The Seneca Lake watershed contains 18% of the total water in the Oswego River Basin, a land area of 5,100 sq miles. Over 100,000 people depend on the water from the Seneca Lake watershed. Downstream from the Seneca Lake watershed is the Seneca River, Cayuga Lake, the Oswego River and eventually Lake Ontario. Whatever pollution affects the Seneca Lake watershed will eventually affect every body of water downstream from it.

SLPWA is an organization of over 270 property owners/residents in the Seneca Lake watershed. The association was formed in 1991 to promote the understanding, preservation and improvement of the water quality, natural habitat and general environmental conditions of Seneca Lake and its watershed. The association's website at <http://www.senecalake.org/> has current information regarding its activities and includes this set of minimum requirements for protection of the Seneca Lake watershed.

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