

Land owners of N.Y

October 08 , 2008

The Honorable Governor David A. Paterson
State Capital
Albany, NY 12224

Re: Oil and Gas Leasing in New York1

Dear Governor Paterson:

We are New York landowners and are in favor of clean, safe drilling for natural gas. We know you have heard a lot of opposition to drilling from anti-drilling groups. But you have yet to hear from us, the landowners. We are the silent majority.

Like anti-drilling groups, we landowners oppose pollution. But we know that, with strong oversight from an empowered Department of Environmental Conservation, we can accomplish clean drilling. We also recognize that a common-sense and rational approach to gas drilling is needed. We must balance both the risks and rewards of drilling in an intelligent way.

The actual risks of drilling for natural gas are small. The benefits, however, are extraordinary, and they will inure to the entire state of New York. Owners of small parcels of land and big farms alike will reap financial rewards from leasing bonuses and royalties. Communities will be revitalized with an influx of cash that they can invest in small businesses, home improvements, farming and new charities. Working-class people will find an abundance of high-paying jobs as gas companies expand in our state. There will be a multiplier effect as all these dollars circulate through local economies.

The State of New York also stands to reap a phenomenal harvest of tax revenues from gas-related activity. These revenues will strengthen every aspect of our state finances and will positively affect every resident throughout the state.

The anti-drilling groups would have you believe that these benefits are nothing more than a pipedream. Learning about gas drilling from anti-drilling groups is like going to an “informational meeting on air travel” only to be shown pictures of every plane crash from the last decade. The anti-drilling groups have spread misinformation and, more importantly, they have distorted the facts surrounding drilling. Their arguments are shortsighted and alarmist and we refuse to stay silent any longer.

New York cannot afford to let this promising opportunity slip through its hands. Yet, this is what is happening every day. Gas companies are walking away from New York because of uncertainty about the upcoming revision to the GEIS and because of objections to drilling in the NYC watershed. They would rather invest their exploration dollars in Pennsylvania and West Virginia.

We need clarity from you and from the DEC in order to stop this outflow of investment dollars.

The three main issues to be dealt with—baseline water testing, proper disposal of fracking fluids, and brine water disposal—are all within our power to resolve. I belong to the Central New York Landowners Coalition, and the gas lease we have written already addresses these items. We simply need support from the state to make sure *all* wells are drilled according to “best practices,” and to make sure there are strong regulations in place for the proper disposal of frack fluid and brine water. All we ask is that you give the DEC the support they need to do their job well.

The future of natural gas in New York State can be extraordinary.

—With gas lines running through more areas a large percentage of New York homes could convert from oil heat to clean, cheap natural gas for heating.

—We could create widespread infrastructure for compressed natural gas vehicles. Imagine, fleet vehicles (buses and trucks) and consumer cars alike, all powered by natural gas and all fueled for less than *half* the cost of gasoline.

—We could create small and mid-sized natural gas-fired power plants so that electricity is generated locally and regionally. This would obviate the need for enormous long-distance power lines.

—We could lower the state’s overall carbon footprint.

—We could increase the wealth of the state while simultaneously increasing the wealth of millions of individual citizens.

—Regional power plants could supply clean, cheap electricity to New York City and Long Island, all fueled by natural gas from upstate New York. Finally, a situation where both downstate *and* upstate win.

This is a matter of utmost urgency. We need your leadership. We cannot afford to leave this tied up in red tape for another year. Gas companies are leaving New York. Other states are eating what should be *our* lunch. Please empower the DEC to cut through the environmental hysteria and fear-mongering. Allow the DEC to assess the true risks of drilling for natural gas. It will be found that the risks of drilling for natural gas are minimal when done properly. Let the DEC lay out a solid plan for safe, clean drilling. Finally, increase well permit fees to fund an expanded DEC inspection and enforcement team.

Then, let us move forward with the incredible opportunity that lies before us all.

Sincerely, We the tax payers and land owners of N.Y. state

