* CATSKILL MOUNTAINKEEPER * CITIZEN ACTION OF THE SOUTHERN TIER * CITIZENS CAMPAIGN FOR THE ENVIRONMENT * EARTHWORKS'OIL & GAS ACCOUNTABILITY PROJECT * ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCATES OF NEW YORK * NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION * NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL * NEW YORK PUBLIC INTEREST RESEARCH GROUP * NEW YORKERS FOR SUSTAINABLE ENERGY SYSTEMS STATEWIDE * RIVERKEEPER, INC. * THE WILDERNESS SOCIETY *

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IN RESPONSE TO NYS ENERGY PLAN, ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS CALL ON GOVERNOR TO PUT DRINKING WATER AHEAD OF NATURAL GAS INDUSTRY

(ALBANY, NY) – In response to the release today of the New York State Energy Plan, which calls for doubling in-state production of natural gas, environmental groups are calling on Governor Paterson, the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and the State Legislature to implement protective rules and regulations for natural gas drilling and to provide DEC with the staff to enforce such rules. The State Energy Plan relies on drilling in the Marcellus Shale formation to provide the dramatic uptick in natural gas production.

Earlier this year, the DEC released a draft plan for drilling in the Marcellus Shale, which includes the Southern Tier and Catskills, for public comment. The comment period closes on December 31, 2009. In other parts of the country, natural gas drilling has poisoned drinking water, polluted air and plagued communities in other states. The groups believe the State's draft drilling plan is fatally flawed and lacks the teeth to protect New Yorkers from industrial gas drilling.

Environmental organizations, good government groups, as well as tens of thousands of New Yorkers, are calling on state leaders to drop the flawed plan, go back to the drawing board, and issue rules and regulations that will:

- limit the use of toxic chemicals in the drilling process;
- protect streams, rivers, and groundwater from the large water withdrawals associated with drilling techniques such as hydraulic fracturing, often called "fracking";
- conduct a cumulative impact assessment to protect our communities from the large-scale impacts of fracking; and
- delineate "no-drill zones" or processes for declaring sensitive areas unsuitable for drilling.

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