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The Honorable Sheldon Silver
Speaker
New York State Assembly
Albany, New York 12247

Dear Speaker Silver,

We are writing to urge an Assembly vote on A.11443-B when the Assembly reconvenes this week. This bill would prevent the Department of Environmental Conservation from issuing permits to hydraulically fracture in the Marcellus and Utica Shales until May 15, 2011. This bill has the support of communities, environmental, and civic groups across the state and the organizations listed above represent tens of thousands of New Yorkers.

Combined hydraulic fracturing and horizontal drilling uses anywhere from 2.5 to 8 million gallons of fluids—water combined with a toxic chemical cocktail—per well. For each well that is drilled, hundreds of thousands of gallons of chemicals are combined with the water to create the fluids used to fracture the rock. In states that already use this type of drilling (i.e., Pennsylvania, Wyoming, Colorado), severe water quality, air quality and health impacts have been documented. Drinking water has been contaminated to the point where it can be used for neither drinking nor daily household chores.

This bill will give New York more time to thoroughly review this issue and develop more protective practices. In addition to providing the incoming governor and his administration with an opportunity for a fresh look at the serious issues surrounding natural gas development, this suspension would also provide the legislature with the chance to make statutory changes necessary to, among other things:

- protect water supplies by banning the use of toxic or carcinogenic chemicals in the fracking process that could travel into our water supplies;
- clarify environmental conservation law restoring home rule rights to municipalities;
- protect aquatic ecosystems by setting strict wastewater treatment standards for any treatment facilities to ensure that the salty, chemical-laden wastes that hydraulic fracturing creates do not pollute our waterways;
- protect New York's streams, lakes, and rivers by implementing a system to oversee the large water withdrawals associated with hydraulic fracturing; and
- provide the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) with the staff and resources needed to develop protective regulations and enforce our rules and laws.

The New York State Senate passed the bill on August 3, 2010. It is our hope that the Assembly will do the same this year to protect New Yorker's water, our communities and our quality of life.

Thank you, and please don't hesitate to reach out to Katherine Nadeau of Environmental Advocates of New York at 518.462.5526 x221 or Roger Downs of Sierra Club—Atlantic Chapter at 518.426.9144 for more information.