



Limited Gas Drilling in New York?

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The New York Times recently reported that Governor Andrew M. Cuomo's administration is quietly contemplating allowing hydraulic fracturing to occur on a limited basis in towns that welcome drilling and in areas where the Marcellus Shale formation is deepest. [1] While the deliberations are still continuing and DEC Commissioner Joe Martens has declined to give any definitive timeline or answer as to whether fracking will be allowed at all in New York, this latest development acknowledges the necessary balance in addressing the growing economic need in upstate New York for hydraulic fracking and recognizing the strong opposition based largely on environmental concerns.

By proposing to drill in limited areas, this will allow New York to analyze the outcome in this narrow "test group" and assist in slowly easing New York into a broader application of hydraulic fracturing for natural gas. While there are more communities that have passed moratoria or bans on fracking than those in favor of gas drilling in New York, it appears that the administration is looking to begin the permitting process. Although the proposal is not final, administration officials have indicated that the current plan is to allow hydraulic fracturing to initially occur in five counties near the Pennsylvania border – Broome, Chemung, Chenango, Steuben, and Tioga counties – if local governments agree to it.

Additionally, while there has not been a final determination as to whether New York State will even allow fracking, it is readily apparent that if hydraulic fracturing moves forward in New York, it will be done under the strictest standards in the country. If these standards are too strict, however, New York may lose its competitive advantage with other states and developers will either leave or not come to New York at all.

Source: Karen Edelstein, [fracktracker.org](http://www.fracktracker.org), <http://www.fracktracker.org/fracktracker-maps/ny-moratoria/>

- Danny Hakim, *Cuomo Plan Would Limit Gas Drilling to a Few Counties in New York*, N.Y. Times, June 13, 2012, at <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/14/nyregion/hydrofracking-under-cuomo-plan-would-be-restricted-to-a-few-counties.html>