

**An Urgent Letter from Josh Fox and Sandra Steingraber
to the 19 Million People of New York State**

Dear fellow New Yorkers,

You know us as a documentary filmmaker and a science writer. Together and separately, we've worked for the past three years to investigate the horror show that is hydraulic fracking. In both images and words, we've documented the irremediable threats that fracking poses to public health, to our air, food, and water systems, to a vibrant economy, and to a sustainable future.

We've unearthed industry documents, brought science to public hearings, traveled to fracked communities across the nation, and interviewed terrorized people.

We've stood next to pits full of poisonous frack waste.

We've seen the earth turned inside out for the strip-mining of frack sand.

We've been run off the road by fracking trucks.

We've researched, analyzed, compiled, debated, and testified. We've confronted trade secrets, medical gag orders, and non-disclosure agreements. And what we (and others) have reported is deeply troubling. Well casings leak. Air fills with benzene, silica dust, and smog. Drill cuttings are radioactive. Water becomes flammable. And most alarming: people in other states who live near fracking operations—and their animals—are getting sick.

If facts and information truly formed the basis of Governor Cuomo's upcoming decision to maintain or lift our state's current moratorium on shale gas fracking, our work would be done. But they don't. And it isn't.

The comprehensive review of fracking that the governor ordered the Department of Environmental Conservation to compile was crafted under the influence of the gas industry. It is less science than infomercial. And the DEC official responsible for its accuracy, Bradley J. Field, is an avowed climate change denier.

Nevertheless, and over the repeated objections of elected officials, physicians, independent scientists, and thousands of concerned citizens, the governor appears poised to move forward with fracking. At the same time, with the might of the gas industry pushing him to take that step, he has not yet done so. Indeed, he's been careful to leave an exit door open. All of us together—with love, science, and no-surrender determination—can help direct Governor Cuomo to the exit. All together, we can still make fracking a political impossibility in New York State.

At this perilous moment, the Governor needs to hear from the people like never before. And that's why we are writing to you.

We are asking for two big things. First, join more than 1,500 other New Yorkers and sign the Pledge to Resist Fracking in New York State: <http://www.dontfrackny.org/pledge/>. This proclamation expresses unalterable opposition to fracking in New York and a solemn commitment to nonviolent protest should the Governor approve it anywhere in our state.

Second, get on the bus. Join us on Monday, August 27 as multitudes of concerned people convene in Albany for a historic day called [Don't Frack New York](#). Speaking with one voice, we'll deliver our pledges of resistance to Governor Cuomo and demand a ban on fracking. There will be street theater, music, inspiring speeches, a rally, and a march. [Artists Against Fracking](#) will be there with us, as will award-winning writer and [350.org](#) founder Bill McKibben. And for those who can, we invite you to arrive in Albany two days prior, on August 25 and 26, for a weekend of trainings and strategy discussions that will precede Monday's mass mobilization.

We do not lightly call our fellow New Yorkers from their families, homes, jobs, and summer vacations, for the hard, slogging work of political action. We ourselves would rather be making movies or writing books. But both of us—like a lot of you—have come to believe that a defining moment has arrived: we now must all stand together or, assuredly, we shall all be fracked separately.

Out of this belief, each of us is donating \$1,500 from our respective personal emergency funds to help underwrite the cost of this event. If you are so led, you can contribute as well—the [Don't Frack New York webpage](#) makes it easy—but what we are really writing to ask for is not your money but your time, voice, and resolve to protect this beautiful state and the people who live here. We are asking for the courage of your convictions.

Consider the pledge. Consider Albany on August 27.

Love,

Josh Fox, Academy Award-nominated filmmaker, *Gasland*, *The Sky is Pink*
Sandra Steingraber, Heinz Award recipient, author, *Living Downstream*, *Raising Elijah*