

♦Common Cause/NY♦Center for Environmental Health♦Catskill Mountainkeeper♦  
Delaware Riverkeeper Network♦Food & Water Watch♦Catskill Citizens for Safe Energy♦  
Citizens Campaign for the Environment ♦Citizens for Water ♦NYH2O ♦  
Damascus Citizens for Sustainability♦Riverkeeper, Inc.♦Frack Action

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**Government Watchdog and Environmental Groups Join Call to Scrap the SGEIS  
*New Review Shows Further Revelations of Additional Disturbing Conflicts of Interest***

Today, Common Cause/NY, Catskill Mountainkeeper, Delaware Riverkeeper Network, Food & Water Watch, Catskill Citizens for Safe Energy, Center for Environmental Health, Citizens Campaign for the Environment, Citizens for Water, NYH2O, Damascus Citizens for Sustainability, and Frack Action called on Governor Cuomo to scrap the Revised Draft Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement (RDSGEIS) for high volume horizontal hydraulic fracturing (“fracking”) due to the extent of involvement in the preparation of the SGEIS by three firms who are members of the Independent Oil and Gas Association of New York (IOGA NY). A new review undertaken by Common Cause/NY showed two more IOGA members worked on the SGEIS, bringing the total to three. The groups also asked for a full accounting of relationships between SGEIS reviewers and IOGA.

IOGA NY is the state’s leading voice advocating for the gas industry and touting the safety and economic benefits of fracking. On its website, the group describes itself as “represent[ing] oil and gas professionals to the citizens and lawmakers of New York State.” Just last July, the organization received \$2 million from Exxon Mobil to run a pro-fracking advertising campaign.

Listed alongside over 200 other corporate members on IOGA NY’s April 22 letter calling on Governor Cuomo to open New York State to fracking are three engineering and consulting firms that were retained by the New York Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and NYSERDA during the preparation of the Revised Draft SGEIS— Ecology and Environment Inc. (E&E), Alpha Geoscience, and URS Corporation.

Research, including documents produced in response to a FOIL request, reveal that these firms were deeply involved in the review and response to public comments. Although heavily redacted, the FOILED documents show that E & E was intricately involved in the comment review and response process, participating in weekly reviews with government officials. Indeed, the documents show that, at times, E & E had nearly as many staff involved in the review process as the DEC itself.

Alpha Geoscience was hired by NYSERDA to refute the analysis submitted to the initial SGEIS by one expert Hydro-geologist, Hydro-geologist, Tom Myers, hired by Catskill Mountainkeeper, Earthjustice NRDC and Riverkeeper Inc, which it did in a taxpayer-financed 57 page report . This earlier advocacy role raises serious questions about Alpha Geoscience’s ability to maintain an objective viewpoint during the RDSGEIS review and evaluation process.

Similarly, URS Corporation, also consulting with DEC to prepare the RDSGEIS, was previously retained by NYSERDA to provide positions on water-related issues associated with gas production in the Marcellus Shale.

The affiliation of E&E, Alpha Geoscience, and URS Corporation with IOGA NY raises disturbing questions about the firms’ role as supposedly impartial expert advisors to the DEC. With such close ties

to the natural gas industry, these firms clearly stand to garner greater profits in the long run by serving the interests of industry rather than government, a common potential conflict of interest when industry-related consultants are tapped to perform evaluations and reviews by government. In light of these further revelations, the groups question what further facts might be discovered which would reveal further industry influence over what was to be an objective and neutral government review and evaluation process.

Common Cause/NY Executive Director Susan Lerner stated, “We are deeply disquieted by this large scale breach of the public interest. New Yorkers submitted over 66,000 comments on the proposed SGEIS in good faith, reflecting their concerns. These conflicts of interest discredit the impartiality of the review process.” Lerner concluded, “New Yorkers demand and deserve a truly independent evaluation of the risks and benefits attendant to hydraulic fracturing and should not be expected to trust the results of these consultants’ work.”

“It is ridiculous that multiple contractors with industry ties were hired by two agencies for huge sums of money, with the appearance of advocating for drilling. All the while we were told money could not be put in the Budget for a comprehensive Health Impact Assessment. It is certainly flattering that an industry consultant was hired to do specific review of our comments showing how contaminants will get into aquifers but this just reeks of government scandal,” pointed out Wes Gillingham, Program Director of Catskill Mountainkeeper.

“New York's environmental review process requires impartial expertise by the state. The taint of bias on the part of consultants they hired for this most critical review of fracking is the kiss of death, invalidates their findings, and there's no other choice but to throw out the entire report,” said Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper.

“Unfortunately the conflicts of interest involving paid consultants retained by the DEC should surprise no one. The department’s Division of Mineral Resources has repeatedly shown itself to be little more than a captive agency of the industry it is supposed to regulate. It has misled the public about the chemical ingredients used in fracking fluid, and concealed the hundreds of drilling accidents that have endangered New Yorkers in the past. A thorough housecleaning is in order,” said Bruce Ferguson of Catskill Citizens for Safe Energy.

“Fracking is a dangerous process that can make people sick. We can't afford to leave New Yorkers' health in the hands of the industry that stands to profit from fracking,” said Ansje Miller, Eastern States Director for the Center for Environmental Health.

“In November 2011, Riverkeeper called out DEC Commissioner Joe Martens for the pro-fracking bias that pervades the state's socioeconomic impact analysis. Nearly two years later, we learn that the firm who developed the socioeconomic impact analysis has ties with IOGA NY and that the entire RDSGEIS is in question. We need to wipe the slate clean and start over with an honest review. Until that is done, the process is fundamentally flawed and cannot justify public trust,” said Paul Gallay, the Hudson Riverkeeper.

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