Two, Three, This, That, Their, There

gas-drilling fears abound tuesday, december 2, 2008 11:00 pm oneonta \_ kate marsiglio, of walton, told state officials she worries about water quality for her 2-year-old son, isaac, who rode piggyback during a public hearing at the state university college at oneonta on tuesday night. marsiglio, a farmer, said the department of environmental conservation needs to develop a new generic environmental impact statement, not a supplement as planned, to address the factors and concerns tied to proposed horizontal drilling and high-volume hydraulic fracturing. those methods would extract natural gas from local shale formations. more than 300 people attended the hearing in hunt union ballroom at the state university college at oneonta. between 30 and 40 signed up to comment on potential environmental impacts of horizontal wells and drilling in new york's natural gas-bearing marcellus and utica shale formations, dec officials said. chemical toxicity, traffic, damage to roads, health impacts, flood perils and other hazards were among concerns some speakers raised. others said benefits of the drilling projects included creating jobs, invigorating the economy, and producing fuel **THAT** can reduce reliance on foreign supplies. dr. antoinette kuzminski, an internist who lives in fly creek, said the state should at least pass a moratorium on the drilling until ``such time as robust methods are in place to ensure **THAT** no contamination of the water supply will occur. ``even though the gas-drilling industry wishes to reassure us of the impossibility of these chemical entering our water supply, we know **THAT** no human technology is perfect, especially if it's carried out miles underground at high pressures,'' kuzminski continued. more than 1,500 property owners in otsego, delaware and chenango counties have agreed to let firms prospect for natural gas on **THEIR** land, according to county records. interest has been building for a few years. state law guarantees landowners a 12.5 percent royalty on producing wells. at the hearing, a consultant said reports and studies about horizontal drilling would be submitted to the dec for consideration in the scoping process. state sen. james seward, r-milford, said drilling could provide a multibillion-dollar economic boost for areas surrounding the marcellus shale formation. the draft of the dec's document is comprehensive, he said, but noted the important role of the state agency and local governments, which should be notified of drilling applications, not merely of granted permits. ``it is absolutely imperative **THAT** environmental protections are in place,'' seward said. ``local impacts are best judged by local officials and local citizens.'' although **THERE** is a geis covering gas and oil drilling in the state, the dec determined **THAT** a supplement was needed to address issues related to the large volumes of water required to hydrofracture shale to release the gas. but several speakers agreed the existing geis was outdated. assemblyman pete lopez, r-schoharie, said a balance must be found between economic opportunities, property rights and environmental protections. `` **THIS** issue is a sensitive issue,'' lopez said. the dec must look carefully at wastewater issues, chemical additives used in the process and specifying site factors. glen noto, new lisbon town councilman, said open-pit storage of fluids cannot be allowed, and questions about possible developments in case of flooding must be addressed. and, he said, **THERE** must be an adequate number of inspectors to oversee permitting and projects. the hearing was the fifth of six on the draft statement, with the final hearing thursday in loch sheldrake in sullivan county. the dec will accept comments on the draft until 5 p.m. dec. 15. dec officials said the final document will be ready in the summer. bradley field, director of mineral resources with the dec, said 13 applications, including five in the past **THREE** weeks, have been filed for horizontal drilling in the marcellus shale formation. five applications were for sites in delaware county, at least **TWO** are in chenango county, and others are in tioga county, he said. firms filing the applications include nornew inc. and chesapeake appalachia, field said, and issues raised tuesday night in oneonta were consistent with comments presented at other hearings. ``the protection of groundwater is crucial,'' said florence loomis, of new lisbon, at the hearing. developments should be held to the highest standards, she said, and towns should be compensated for projects. ``we are not ready for the heavy industry of natural gas extraction,'' said ronald bishop, a chemist from cooperstown. bishop, a member of sustainable otsego, said he was alarmed by the large number of leases property owners in otsego county had signed with drilling firms. to comment the draft for the supplemental generic environmental impact statement is available at http://www.dec.ny.gov/energy/45912.html. comments, due by 5 p.m. dec. 15, may be sent to the bureau of oil and gas regulation, nysdec bureau of mineral resources, 625 broadway, third floor, albany, ny 12233-6500, or by e-mail to dmnog@gw.dec.state.ny.us. submission should indicate ``scope comments'' as the subject.