

**ONEONTA, NEW YORK - AUGUST 4, 2009 - 7:30 P.M.**

**RESOLUTION**

**CALLING ON THE NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATURE, THE  
NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL  
CONSERVATION, AND NEW YORK STATE GOVERNOR  
DAVID PATERSON TO PROHIBIT DRILLING FOR NATURAL  
GAS WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF THE WATERSHED OF  
THE ONEONTA DRINKING WATER SUPPLY.**

WHEREAS, Wilber Lake, the Oneonta drinking water supply is one of our most vital resources; and

WHEREAS, The high quality of the water supplied to Oneonta from the Wilber Lake watershed, along with the actions being taken by the City of Oneonta, Environmental Board, and associated organizations working to preserve and improve the quality of that water has kept the Wilber Lake water supply at the highest quality; and

WHEREAS, The entire Wilber Lake watershed, which provides the vast majority of the City's daily water supply and portions of the Town of Oneonta, sits atop the Marcellus Shale geological formation, which contains large deposits of natural gas; and

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**REGULAR MEETING OF THE COMMON COUNCIL      VOL. 5, PG. 367**

**(Resolution)** continued

WHEREAS, Rising natural gas prices and new developments in gas recovery technology have recently made drilling for natural gas in the Marcellus Shale formation economically viable; and

WHEREAS, Drilling within the Marcellus Shale employs a technique known as hydraulic fracturing, a recovery process that frees natural gas deposits using large quantities of water, combined with multiple chemical additives, many of which are known to be toxic; and

WHEREAS, Chapter 376 of the Laws of New York State of 2008 streamlined the permitting process for horizontal wells that use hydraulic fracturing, allowing the development of natural gas drilling sites within the Marcellus Shale in New York to proceed more quickly; and

WHEREAS, Chemicals contained in hydraulic fracturing fluids have been associated with a variety of public health risks, including developmental delays and cancers; and

WHEREAS, Hydraulic fracturing presents risks of water contamination during drilling operations and during the storage and disposal of millions of gallons of the water and chemical additive mixture required for each well that is created; and

WHEREAS, Hydraulic fracturing has resulted in contaminated water supplies in other states, including Wyoming and New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, No amount of careful planning and operation can guarantee that there will be no chemical spills that could flow into aquifers, underground migration of fracturing fluids toward the water supply, or other accidents resulting from drilling operations; and

WHEREAS, the City's existing water treatment plant would not necessarily be capable of removing all contaminants that present public health risks from the drinking water supply; and

WHEREAS, Wilber Lake watershed area represents less than one percent of the total land area over the Marcellus Shale formation; and

WHEREAS, A prohibition on drilling for natural gas within the watershed for the City of Oneonta drinking water supply would have a negligible impact on the total amount of economic development, profit to gas companies, and additional State tax revenue; and

WHEREAS, A prohibition on drilling within the watershed for the City of Oneonta drinking water supply would, however, provide important long-term protection to the City of Oneonta water supply and all its users from the potentially serious adverse impacts of the hydraulic fracturing process; and

WHEREAS, Due in part to pressure exerted by environmental advocates in New York City, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has committed, in its Final Scope of Work for its Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement on horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracturing, to study the need to exclude part or all of the watersheds for the state's drinking water supplies from the land on which it will permit drilling; and

WHEREAS, A prohibition on drilling for natural gas within the watershed for the City of Oneonta drinking water supply may be enacted through State legislation or established through a determination by the DEC that natural gas drilling is inconsistent with water supply protection; and

WHEREAS, Governor Paterson may also seek a prohibition on drilling for natural gas within the watershed for the City of Oneonta drinking water supply by introducing such legislation in the State Legislature and actively promoting it;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT**

**RESOLVED**, That the Common Council of the City of Oneonta calls on the New York State Legislature, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, and New York State Governor David Paterson to take steps necessary to prohibit drilling for natural gas within the boundaries of the watershed of the City of Oneonta drinking water supply.