

September 15, 2011

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo  
Governor of New York State  
NYS State Capitol Building  
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:


We the undersigned scientists write to you regarding the ability of municipal drinking water filtration systems to adequately remove contaminants of the sort found in return fluids from hydraulic fracturing, should they somehow enter the water system. The State has proposed that hydraulic fracturing not be allowed in the watersheds of the New York City and Syracuse water systems (where no filtration occurs), but be allowed in watersheds where drinking water is filtered before use. The presumption appears to be that municipal water filtration plants provide protection from potential contaminants. The best available scientific information does not support this presumption.

Most municipal water filtration systems are designed to remove potentially dangerous microorganisms from water, which they do efficiently. The typical filtration system would also remove some hazardous substances. However, there simply is not an adequate knowledge base to conclude that filtering would remove all, or even most, of the hazardous substances found in flow-back fluids from hydraulic fracturing. Potential contaminants of concern known to be in some flow-back fluids include benzene and other volatile aromatic hydrocarbons, surfactants and organic biocides, barium and other toxic metals, and soluble radioactive compounds containing thorium, radium, and uranium. Municipal filtration systems were not designed with such hazards in mind, and the ability of the filtration systems to remove such hazardous substances has received little, if any, study. We believe, however, the best available science suggests that some of these substances would pass through the typical municipal filtration system.

We urge the State to reconsider its position that existing water filtration systems provide adequate protection against the risk of hydraulic fracturing, should materials from flow-back fluids migrate to lakes, reservoirs, or groundwaters used for municipal water supplies.

Each signatory of this letter has significant professional experience with water treatment systems, with aquatic chemistry or biogeochemistry, and/or with the movement and fate of toxic or radioactive materials. We write as individuals and our professional affiliations are listed for your information. You should not infer any endorsement of our viewpoint by our affiliated institutions.

Sincerely,



Robert Howarth, Ph.D.  
the David R. Atkinson Professor of Ecology  
at Cornell University  
Founding Editor, *Biogeochemistry*  
Member of the Board of Directors, PSE

**And 58 other scientists, listed alphabetically below.**

Beth Ahner, Ph.D., Professor of Biological and Environmental Engineering, Cornell University

Aria Amirbahman, Ph.D., P.E., Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering, University of Maine

Mary A. Arthur, Ph.D., Professor of Forest Ecology, University of Kentucky

Jill S. Baron, Ph.D., Ecosystem Ecologist, U.S. Geological Survey, and Senior Research Ecologist, Natural Resource Ecology Laboratory, Colorado State University

Gilles Billen, Ph.D., Professor of Biogeochemistry, Institute of Pierre and Marie Curie, University of Paris VI

Mark Benjamin, Ph.D., Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering, University of Washington

Gaboury Benoit, Ph.D., Grinstein Class of 1954 Professor of Environmental Chemistry, Yale University

Neil Bettez, Ph.D., Postdoctoral Associate, Cary Institute for Ecosystem Studies, Millbrook, NY

James Bisogni, Ph.D., Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering, Cornell University

Bruce Brownawell, Ph.D., Associate Professor, School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences, Stony Brook University

Mark J. Burrows, MSE, Physical Scientist, International Joint Commission

Nina Caraco, Ph.D., Aquatic Biogeochemist, Cary Institute for Ecosystem Studies, Millbrook, NY

Michael J. Carvan III, Ph.D., Shaw Associate Professor, School of Freshwater Sciences, University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee

Paul Chadik, Ph.D., Associate Professor and Department Head, Department of Environmental Engineering Sciences, University of Florida at Gainesville

Terry Chapin, Ph.D., Professor of Ecology, University of Alaska, and member of the National Academy of Sciences

Theo Colborn, Ph.D., President, The Endocrine Disruption Exchange, and Professor Emeritus at the University of Florida

Jonathan J. Cole, Ph.D., Distinguished Senior Scientist and G.E. Hutchinson Chair, Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies

Eric Davidson, Ph.D., President and Executive Director, Woods Hole Research Center, Woods Hole, MA

Ted Endreny, Ph.D., P.H., P.E., Professor and Graduate Coordinator, Environmental Resources Engineering, SUNY-College of Environmental Science and Forestry

Tim Fahey, Ph.D., Professor of Natural Resources, Cornell University

James Galloway, Ph.D., the Sidman P. Poole Professor and Associate Dean for the Sciences, College and Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, University of Virginia

Josette Garnier, Ph.D., Professor of Biogeochemistry and Microbial Ecology, Institute of Pierre and Marie Curie, University of Paris VI

Anne Giblin, Ph.D., Senior Scientist, The Ecosystems Center, Marine Biological Laboratory, Woods Hole, MA

Michael Gilbertson Ph.D., retired, formerly with the International Joint Commission

Christine Goodale, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Ecology & Evolutionary Biology, Cornell University

Peter M. Groffman, Ph.D., Senior Scientist, Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies, Millbrook, NY

Noel Gurwick, Ph.D., Senior Scientist, Union of Concerned Scientists

Leila Hamdan, Ph.D., Research Microbiologist, U.S. Naval Research Laboratory

Christoph Humborg, Ph.D., Professor of Biogeochemistry, University of Stockholm

Penny Johnes, Ph.D., Professor of Freshwater Science, Director of Aquatic Environments Research Centre School of Human & Environmental Sciences, University of Reading

Samantha B. Joye, Ph.D., Distinguished Professor of Marine Sciences, The University of Georgia

Karsten Kalbitz, Ph.D., Professor of Earth Surface Science at the Institute for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Dynamics, University of Amsterdam

Sujay Kaushal, Ph.D. Assistant Professor, Department of Geology and Earth System Science Interdisciplinary Center,  
University of Maryland

Kate Lajtha, Ph.D., Professor of Crop and Soil Science, Oregon State University, and Editor-in-Chief, *Biogeochemistry*

Gene Likens, Ph.D., Emeritus President and Director, Institute of Ecosystem Studies, and member of the National Academy  
of Sciences

Len Lion, Ph.D., Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering, Cornell University

Roxane Maranger, Ph.D., Professor, Département des sciences biologiques, Université de Montréal

Roxanne Marino, Ph.D., Senior Research Associate, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, Cornell University

Murray McBride, Ph.D., Professor of Soil Science and Director of the Cornell Waste Management Institute, Cornell  
University

William McDowell, Ph.D., Presidential Chair and Professor, Department of Natural Resources and the Environment,  
University of New Hampshire

John M. Melack, Ph.D., Professor, Bren School of Environmental Science and Management, University of California at  
Santa Barbara

Myron J. Mitchell, Ph.D., Distinguished Professor and Director of Council on Hydrologic Systems Science, SUNY-College  
of Environmental Science and Forestry

Clay L. Montague, Ph.D., Associate Professor Emeritus, Department of Environmental Engineering Sciences, University of  
Florida

Sharon Moran, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Environmental Sciences, SUNY-College of Environmental Science and  
Forestry

Gene F. Parkin, Ph.D., P.E., the Donald E. Bently Professor of Engineering, and Director of the Center for Health Effects of  
Environmental Contamination, University of Iowa

David A. Reckhow, Ph.D., Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering, University of Massachusetts at Amherst

Jonathan Sanderman, Ph.D., Research Scientist, CSIRO Australia

William Schlesinger, Ph.D., President and Director, Cary Institute for Ecosystem Studies, Millbrook, NY, and member of  
the National Academy of Sciences

David Schindler, Ph.D., the Kilham Memorial Chair Professor, University of Alberta, and member of the National Academy  
of Sciences

Christine Shoemaker, Ph.D., Joseph P. Ripley Professor of Engineering, Cornell University

Elizabeth Sikes, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Marine Organic Geochemistry, Rutgers University

Jennifer Tank, Ph.D., Galla Professor of Biological Sciences, University of Notre Dame

Alan Townsend, Ph.D., Professor of Ecology & Evolutionary Biology and Director of Environmental Studies Program,  
University of Colorado

Ivan Valiela, Ph.D., Emeritus Professor, Boston University, and Senior Research Scientist, the Ecosystems Center, Marine  
Biological Laboratory, Woods Hole

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Edzo Veldkamp, Ph.D., Professor of Soil Science, University of Goettingen

Matthew Wallenstein, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Natural Resource Ecology, Colorado State University

Todd Walter, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Biological and Environmental Engineering, Cornell University

George Woodwell, Ph.D., Emeritus Director, Woods Hole Research Center, and member of the National Academy of Sciences