

August 25, 2009

Lifton: DEC Commissioner Considers Extension of Public Comment Period for Draft SGEIS

Assemblywoman Barbara Lifton (D/WF-Tompkins/Cortland) today released a letter she received from Alexander (Pete) Grannis, Commissioner of DEC, responding to her May 28, 2009 letter to him, in which she urged an extension of the public comment period from 30 to 90 days following the issuance of the draft Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement (SGEIS) in relation to gas drilling in the Marcellus Shale, due out within the month.

In his letter to Lifton, Grannis responded by saying, "I believe we will be substantially extending the 30-day minimum set out in our procedures." He also spoke to the tremendous amount of public comment that had already come to DEC, 3,000 written comments, and the DEC's incorporating of those concerns in the scoping document that came out February 6, 2009.

"I am very pleased to hear from Commissioner Grannis that the DEC is strongly considering the kind of extension I and my constituents have asked for. Because this is such a critical issue, I believe it is important to have as much public discourse and input as possible. The Commissioner is showing the kind of responsiveness that I would expect of him. His response acknowledges the very legitimate concerns of the public about protecting our precious water resources, among other important issues," Lifton said.

Lifton concluded, "The Commissioner's response to me bodes well for the process that lies ahead and I hope, in the end, I will be able to agree with the Commissioner that our current fears are unfounded and that we will see that New York's strong environmental laws will prevent the kind of disasters we've heard about in Pennsylvania, Colorado and other states. At any rate, I will continue to watch closely and weigh in when the draft SGEIS is released and beyond."