

Washer Not Spinning?
Fridge Not Cold Enough?

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
Friday: Andy Taylor

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Saturday: Frankie Michaels

Hydrofracking sure to contaminate water

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2011

As an environmental engineering technician with NYSDEC Region 5, I managed scores of groundwater remediation projects in the 1990s. I've reviewed countless hydrogeologic reports and seen thousands of lab results from contaminated wells. I'm familiar with the fate and transport of contaminants in fractured media, and let me be clear:

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Hydraulic fracturing as it's practiced today will contaminate our aquifers.

Not might contaminate our aquifers. Hydraulic fracturing will contaminate New York's aquifers. If you were looking for a way to poison the drinking water supply, here in the Northeast you couldn't find a more chillingly effective and thorough method of doing so than with hydraulic fracturing.

My experience investigating and remediating contaminated groundwater taught me some lessons. There's no such thing as a perfect well seal. Occasionally sooner, often later, well seals can and do fail, period.

No confining layer is completely competent; all geologic strata leak to some extent. The fact that a less-transmissive layer lies between the drill zone and a well does not protect the well from contamination.

A drinking water well is never in "solid" rock. If it were, it would be a dry hole in the ground. As water moves through joints, fissures and bedding planes into a well, so do contaminants. In fractured media such as shale, water follows preferential pathways, moving fast and far, miles per week in some cases.

In the absence of oxygen (such as under the ground), organic compounds break down infinitesimally slowly. Chemicals injected into the aquifer will persist for many lifetimes.

When contamination occurs—and it will occur—we will all pay for it, regardless of where we live. Proving responsibility for groundwater contamination is difficult, costly and time-consuming, and while



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corporate lawyers drag out proceedings for years, everyone's taxes will pay for the subsurface investigations, the whole-house filtration systems, the unending lab analyses.

I'd love to see hundreds more jobs created. But not if it means hundreds of thousands using well water will be at a high risk of contamination. Not if it means every New Yorker will be on the hook for the cost for cleanup and for creating alternate water supplies. If your well goes bad, neither you, nor your children, nor their children will ever be able to get safe, clean water back. That's too high a price.

Drill for gas, absolutely, but develop safe technologies first.

Paul Hetzler

Canton

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By [Karla Fisk](#) Tue., Dec. 13 at 7:15 pm

Bravo Mr. Hetzler in having the courage to come forward and tell the truth.

Regarding well casings and caps: methane migration happens *outside* the concrete well bore casing(s). If there's methane there, and a well bore is drilled, there will be methane migration, it's just a matter of when. Concrete shrinks, it doesn't "stick" to shale rock, and it all eventually fails.

We must protect our water: no matter what.

By [Frank J. Thies](#) Tue., Dec. 13 at 11:17 am

Sunshine firmly believes that for his CONservative propaganda to be successful, he must always tell only half of the story.

Here is an excerpt from an article published March 04, 2011, in the Daily Freeman, a newspaper serving the Hudson Valley:

"Hinchey presses U.S. officials on hydrofracking revelations"

A special New York Times report on previously unreported

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