

Lake watershed group votes to oppose 'fracking

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CANANDAIGUA — The Board of Directors of the Canandaigua Lake Watershed Association has voted unanimously to oppose hydraulic fracturing drilling for natural gas in the watershed.

The watershed includes parts of Ontario and Yates counties.

In announcing the vote, the board issued a statement saying its members have analyzed the existing scientific research on hydrofracking to determine its potential impact on the water quality and overall environment of the watershed.

“The conclusion of the board is that, at present, this method of gas extraction poses a very real threat to the water quality of Canandaigua Lake, the economic vitality of the businesses in the area and the quality of life of the watershed residents,” the news release stated.

Reasons cited for their opposition are:

- Hydraulic fracturing has contaminated drinking water sources.
- A majority of wastewater treatment plants cannot filter out chemicals used in the fracking process, including radioactivity.
- There is currently no known remediation process to return Canandaigua Lake’s water to potable status, should an accident occur.
- There is currently no comprehensive regulatory or oversight plan for the hydrofracking industry in the state, with the state Department of Environmental Conservation not having sufficient staff to provide that oversight.
- The adequacy of any governmental oversight plan developed under time constraints, especially one purporting to oversee complex technical activities by wealthy, powerful corporations, must be carefully reviewed before horizontal drilling can be permitted.

“It is the board’s reasoned opinion that the risk of potentially tragic outcomes for Canandaigua Lake and its watershed greatly outweigh the considerable benefits of providing more natural gas at this time,” they said, adding that hydrofracking should be banned in all Finger Lakes watersheds.

The association is a not-for-profit organization formed in 1953. It currently has 1,300 members.