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Rita Yelda
PO Box 377
Buffalo, NY 14213

Erie County Legislature
ATTN Clerk Robert Graber
92 Franklin Street 4th Floor
Buffalo, NY 14202

November 21, 2012

Dear Mr. Graber,

My name is Rita Yelda and I am an organizer for Food & Water Watch, a nonprofit consumer advocacy organization that works for clean water and safe food, and I work on the campaign surrounding hydraulic fracturing or "fracking" for natural gas. In 2011, I teamed up with the Buffalo Common Council on the passage of the first city-wide ban on fracking, which led the way for over 100 municipalities in New York State that have since followed suit. I have also collaborated with Legislator Betty Jean Grant in educating residents on the potential impacts of fracking in the state. Because this issue is so timely and is looming over New York communities, we have also discussed the idea of a prohibition on fracking, fracking waste, and fracking infrastructure on Erie County-owned land.

In Pennsylvania, residents living in areas with fracking operations have reported flammable tap water, unexplained health problems, increased municipal costs, degradation of air quality, huge increases in truck traffic, and the list goes on. There are a number of risks involved with welcoming these new and under-regulated techniques in to Erie County, and prohibiting it on county-owned land will help to ensure the health and well-being of our community. Similar legislation prohibiting fracking on county-owned land has already been passed in New York State, including Albany County, Cayuga County, and Ulster County.

I would like to request a time to present for Legislator Terry McCracken's Energy and Environment Committee on the topic of fracking in New York State, take any questions the legislature may have, and discuss next steps towards protecting Erie County residents. If need be, I am prepared to provide the Erie County Legislature with sample legislation written by our allies at Community Environmental Defense Council, as well as having the resources to involve the community in support of county-wide legislation. I can be reached at 716-507-2077 or ryelda@fwwatch.org. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

R. Yelda

Rita Yelda