

## PRESS RELEASE

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# Suffolk County Legislature Votes to Ban Natural Gas Drilling Waste

## *Unanimous Vote to Keep Toxic, Radioactive Waste Out of Wastewater Facilities, Landfills, and Off Roads*

(Riverhead, NY) The Suffolk County Legislature has voted unanimously to ban toxic, radioactive gas drilling waste from wastewater treatment plants and landfills, and from use on roads for de-icing or to control dust anywhere in the county. Suffolk joins a growing list of counties enacting laws to ban the hazardous waste, including Albany, Oneida, Onondaga, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Tompkins, Ulster and Westchester.

Waste products from natural gas drilling operations include water laden with toxic chemicals, radioactive materials, heavy metals and concentrated brine, as well as solid materials including drilling muds and drill cuttings. Because of the naturally occurring radioactive material contained in the Marcellus Shale regions where gas drilling operations are taking place, all of the waste materials are contaminated. Much of the waste will remain radioactive for up to 1600 years.

“This bill is important because we rely on our sole source aquifer for our drinking water,” stated Suffolk County Legislator William R. Spencer, M.D. (D-Centerport). “The use of hydrofracking waste could have serious environmental impact in Suffolk County. I am grateful to my colleagues for supporting this important legislation because it will help to ensure the security of our water and our public health.”

Suffolk County Legislator Al Krupski, who represents the First District, stated “Using the by-products of fracking on Long Island would have long-term negative impacts on our water quality and banning the use of these products is really important.”

"This kind of hazardous waste has no place here on Long Island," said Patti Wood, Executive Director of Grassroots Environmental Education, a science-based Port Washington non-profit that provided information to legislators about the potential health and environmental impacts from gas drilling waste. "Exposure to toxic chemicals and to the radioactive materials are a real threat to public health, and we commend all Suffolk County legislators for doing the right thing."

"Importation of highly-contaminated and radioactive fracking waste into Suffolk County is just not compatible with successful farming," says Maggie Kurek, co-owner of the Golden Earthworm Organic farm in Riverhead. "It has the potential to disrupt and perhaps even destroy what we hope will once again become a thriving agricultural community on Long island, employing thousands of people and providing a solid economic base and fresh food for millions."

The new prohibition will take effect 60 days after it is signed into law by County Executive Steve Bellone.

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*About Grassroots*

*Grassroots Environmental Education is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization based in Port Washington, New York. Grassroots educates the public about the links between common environmental exposures and human health, and the seeks to empower individuals to act as catalysts for change within their own communities. More information is available on the organization's web site, [www.GrassrootsInfo.org](http://www.GrassrootsInfo.org).*