

## Still No Fracking Decision In NY

MICHAEL GORMLEY, Associated Press

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) — Gov. Andrew Cuomo on Monday said he would decide whether New York should allow hydraulic fracturing for natural gas by Election Day next year — maybe.

Cuomo also cautioned that he doesn't want even that ballpark estimate to pressure his staff into a hasty recommendation to lift or make permanent a 2008 moratorium on the "fracking" drilling method to tap gas deep in shale deposits.

The thorny political decision will impact Cuomo's re-election campaign next year and potentially his chances in 2016 should he choose to run for president.

"It's one of the most important decisions I think we will make as a government with far-reaching consequences," Cuomo said. "It's more important to be right than fast."

Yet Cuomo held the news conference Monday and ticked off his fast-tracked accomplishments in three years in office which often defied several years or even decades of indecision. They include replacement of the \$3.9 billion Tappan Zee Bridge in New York City's northern suburbs, creation of teacher evaluations in every public school, three state budgets passed on time with spending increases of 2 percent or less, and a higher minimum wage.

"I think they are totally apples and oranges," Cuomo said. "When it's appropriate to move fast, we move fast."

If Cuomo delays the drilling decision to 2014 as expected, he will have to decide whether to please or disappoint many upstate voters and businesses hungry for the jobs and economic boost of fracking. He is courting their vote hard. A strong upstate Republican vote would also show his cross-party appeal if he should run for president in 2016.

But approving fracking would risk the favor of his liberal Democratic base, much of which strongly opposes the process as a threat to the environment and public health.

Cuomo said he's waiting for an opinion from his appointed health commissioner, Dr. Nirav Shah.

In March, Shah said he planned to make the recommendation to Cuomo "within weeks."

"As recently as a month ago we got new data from Texas and Wyoming, and until I am comfortable with the state of the science, I am withholding my recommendation," Shah said Monday.

## Still No Fracking Decision In NY

Published on Chem.Info (<http://www.chem.info>)

---

"Science needs to be done in a sacred place ... to understand both sides of the issue," said Shah, who also hasn't made any public updates on his research. "The process needs to be transparent at the end, not in the middle."

Cuomo had previously said he would make a decision before Election Day in 2014, but he hedged on that a bit Monday.

"I don't want to put any undue pressure on them that would artificially abbreviate what they are doing," Cuomo said.

"It's just kicking the can down the road again," said Brad Gill, executive director of the Independent Oil and Gas Association of New York.

He said the tough political decision has forced not just Cuomo, but previous governors into inaction. He said Pennsylvania and other states have prospered from drilling in the same Marcellus Shale while New York dithered, prompting companies to move on to other states.

"It's just impossible to make good business decisions with uncertainty as your back drop," Gill said in an interview.

Opponents of fracking say Cuomo is prudent.

"We're confident that when Governor Cuomo and Commissioner Shah make their decision they will see what the majority of upstate New Yorkers have seen — that science shows the water and air contamination and adverse health effects from fracking are just too dangerous to allow in New York," said Dr. Kathleen Nolan of New Yorkers Against Fracking.

**Source URL (retrieved on 07/01/2015 - 8:57am):**

<http://www.chem.info/news/2013/12/still-no-fracking-decision-ny>