

Memorandum

From: City of Cortland Environmental Advisory Committee

To: Cortland Common Council

Re: Sale of City Water to Natural Gas Well Developers

Date: May 8, 2010

It has come to the attention of this Committee that the potential exists for the sale of city water to the developers of natural gas resources in the surrounding area.

The Committee recognizes the opportunity for the city to realize increased revenue through such sales. However, it is our belief that any transaction of this nature would ultimately not be in the public interest.

The "hydrofracking" drilling process currently under review by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation is replete with serious negative consequences for the Cortland-Homer-Preble Sole Source Aquifer that is the exclusive source of drinking water for the citizens of our community. The outcome of that review may result in stringent regulations governing or even banning the hydrofracking process. The Committee's examination of the subject leads us to believe hydrofracking is a practice that could pose a grave threat to groundwater—a threat so grave that any degree of regulation may not be sufficient to overcome the inherent risk. With that in mind, it is the opinion of this Committee that unless it can be conclusively proven that the hydrofracking process can be rendered harmless to our public water supply, it would be imprudent for the city to do anything to enable its progress. That would include selling the vast quantities of water that are needed for hydrofracking to take place. It would be counterintuitive to sell water to enable a resource extraction method that may well irreversibly pollute the source of water that is at the point of sale.

The Committee also believes that the City has a responsibility to the larger community, and that it would be ill-advised to supply water to drilling concerns with plans to carry on hydrofracking activities outside of our immediate area of concern. We live in an interconnected world, and an injury to our neighbors is an injury to us all.

Thank you for your attention to this potentially critical matter.