



[Binghamton, NY]



Abandoned Wells Debate

Published: 10/26 5:17 pm

Updated: 10/26 5:37 pm

There are more than 5,000 unplugged and abandoned wells across New York State.

And, they pose a threat to homes, drinking water sources and wetlands. That's according to **Toxics Targeting**, Binghamton Mayor Matt Ryan and two anti-fracking groups. They highlighted their concerns Friday morning. **Walter Hang of Toxics Targeting, who got the information from the Department of Environmental Conservation, says the gas and oil wells can leak and cause contamination. He's calling on Governor Andrew Cuomo to withdraw the state's revised SGEIS, which are the preliminary fracking guidelines, so the unplugged well issue can be properly addressed in the report.**

Walter Hang says, "DEC's assertion that they've never had contamination problems, that these issues really aren't an issue, that the existing regulations are fine, that's entirely contradicted by this [data](#)."

It could cost the state hundreds of millions of dollars to plug the wells. If fracking is allowed, the DEC plans to require gas drillers to plug existing wells within a mile of drilling operations. **However, Hang says that's not a solution and says there are wells outside of the Marcellus Shale that are leaking. You can see the list of unplugged or abandoned wells at toxicstargeting.com.**

A spokesperson for the DEC says the agency "takes all complaints of water contamination seriously and works with the state Health Department to ensure New York residents have a safe source of drinking water. By and large complaints received by DEC regarding potentially leaking wells have proven to be from wells drilled before environmental regulations were put in place or were from naturally occurring sources of contamination. In addition, under the requirements of the draft SGEIS there are multiple protections and measures required to safeguard the integrity of New York's drinking water supplies."