

### 1.POLITICS:

## N.Y. fracking campaign goes after Cuomo's most influential donors

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NEW YORK -- Pressure on New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo from both sides of his state's hydraulic fracturing fight flared up this week, with local groups and Binghamton Mayor Matthew Ryan having dialed up the heat with a letter to 1,000 Cuomo campaign contributors urging a ban.

The effort to hurt the Democratic governor where it counts -- in the pocketbook -- comes amid increasing lobbying from business groups in New York looking to win permits for the controversial drilling practice. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce is now targeting the state in the run-up to this fall's elections and has plans for a number of ad buys in support of development.

On the other end are local towns stacked up against drilling and activists who fear Cuomo's rumored compromise plan would wreck the state and leave broad swaths of the Marcellus Shale open to production. Cuomo has not made a decision on whether to end a moratorium against high-volume fracturing, or fracking, but all signs point to him letting localities decide for themselves whether they want to drill.

In the letter to the campaign contributors, the groups New York Residents Against Drilling, Vestal Residents for Safe Energy and Chenango Community Action for Renewable Energy said any plans to allow fracking in certain towns, many of them in the state's Southern Tier along the border of Pennsylvania, would treat residents there "as second-class citizens and unfairly subject them to potentially irreparable hazards."

"Given your interest in New York's government affairs, we respectfully ask you to help safeguard our public's health and environment from the unprecedented pollution hazards posed by Marcellus Shale gas 'fracking,'" one version of the letter states.

The letter goes on to cite water pollution problems in the Pittsburgh area that were allegedly linked to fracking chemicals having leaked into local drinking supplies.

The strategy is perhaps more noteworthy for whom it targets, rather than the policy content of the letter, which repeats the gist of the fracking fight. The 1,000 recipients have given Cuomo \$2,000 to \$75,000 in individual donations out of their own pockets.

Included on [the list](#) are representatives from health care, law, accounting, film production, scrap recycling, casino and other firms.

Also on the list are Agnes Gund, president emerita of the Museum of Modern Art; Stephen Bing, founder of the Shangri-La business group; John Catsimatidis, owner of the grocery chain Gristedes Foods; Donald Trump's daughter Ivanka Trump; and other New York luminaries.

Attempts to reach the influential 1,000 were not successful. The maestro of the campaign, Walter Hang, president of the group Toxics Targeting, said he's not surprised to hear those on the list would not return a reporter's call or email.

"Many of the contributors are high-level political operators. They would not speak on the record to you," Hang wrote in an email. "It is very important, however, that the governor know that activists are reaching out to his biggest financial supporters."

Hang added that he has been told some people on the list have already called Cuomo. He said the effort is working "spectacularly well" with coverage from media outlets across the country.

Speaking yesterday on E&ETV's [OnPoint](#), Karen Harbert, president of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Institute for 21st Century Energy, said the group's shale development campaign is about unleashing economic potential for the kinds of local businesses that are crucial to New York's upstate economy, including hotels and restaurants.

"If you're really serious about getting the economy back on track ... shale should be at the top of the list," she said.

[Click here](#) to see the Cuomo list of campaign contributors.