

## Anti-fracking supporters call for ban on test drilling

6:42 PM, Jun. 5, 2012



As pictured from left, biologist and author Sandra Steingraber, Binghamton Mayor Matthew Ryan, president of Ithaca-based Toxics Targeting Walter Hang, Ben Perkus, and former county legislator and Sierra Club member Chris Burger gather in downtown Binghamton on Tuesday afternoon to announce a letter to Gov. Cuomo requesting that he oppose any gas fracking demonstration projects in the Tier or anywhere else in New York State. / CASEY STAFF/ Staff Photo



Written by

[Debbie Swartz](#)

BINGHAMTON -- Mayor Matthew Ryan, along with other anti-fracking supporters, called upon Gov. Andrew Cuomo to put a stop to test wells in New York.

Outside City Hall on Tuesday, supporters of the measure unveiled a letter with more than 2,300 signatures that will be sent to Cuomo. The letter requests the state government cease any plans to allow for test wells for the hydrofracking of natural gas. The measure was put forth by supporters of drilling to allow elected leaders and residents to monitor the [safety](#) of the process.

Ryan and others said the method of hydrofracking is not [safe](#), citing problems with parts of Pennsylvania where some residents say their wells have been contaminated.

"We know it can't be done safely the way that it's done," Ryan said. "There's no reason to rush this. There's so many things that haven't been addressed."

The letter-signers are part of a "broad coalition" which includes scientists, physicians, elected leaders and environmentalists, said Walter Hand, president of Ithaca-based Toxics Targeting, an environmental group. The state needs to do a comprehensive assessment on the health and environmental effects of hydrofracking before any wells are allowed, he said.

"We don't want to be guinea pigs," Hang said.

While drilling supporters have discussed the economic advantages to drilling, the long-term effects have yet to be addressed, said Sandra Steingraber, a biologist and author of "Raising Elijah: Protecting Children in an Age of Environmental Crisis."

"The Southern Tier is not a laboratory," she said.