

# Protest group asks Auburn to stop taking wastewater from natural gas drilling companies

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By [Scott Rapp / The Post-Standard](#) [ Syracuse, NY ]



*John Berry / The Post-Standard* Jeri Sabo, of Summerhill, takes part in a protest outside Auburn Memorial City Hall Thursday over the city's accepting of wastewater created during the natural gas drilling technique of hydrofracking.

Auburn, NY -- Some 75 to 100 people protested today outside Auburn Memorial City Hall in hopes of convincing the city to stop accepting wastewater from natural gas drilling well companies.

The demonstrators, many of them carrying signs, say the wastewater poses a public and environmental health risk to water supplies, fresh water streams, plants and wildlife.

"There's no studying that needs to be done. This is dangerous water and our (wastewater treatment) plant does not have the capability to treat it, and it's time to put a stop to it," said Beth Beer Cuddy, a founding member of the Cayuga Anti-Fracking Alliance group, which sponsored the protest.

The demonstration, which was peaceful, lasted about 30 minutes. Afterward, many of the protesters jammed into city council chambers for the start of the council's weekly meeting. Mayor Mike Quill, who has said he supports enacting a ban on the wastewater, said before the meeting that no vote would be taken today.

The city accepts and treats millions of gallons of wastewater from natural gas drilling companies yearly and makes about \$300,000 a year from the venture. The treated wastewater is then discharged into the Owasco River, which empties into the Seneca River and eventually into Lake Ontario.



*John Berry / The Post-Standard* Beverly Ann Scholl, of Skaneateles, takes part in a protest outside Auburn Memorial City Hall over the city's accepting of wastewater created through the natural gas drilling technique of hydrofracking.

The city says it is following state and federal guidelines for treating the waste. However, Cuddy and others say the sewage treatment plant is not equipped to treat the natural gas wastewater, which they say contains high concentrations of salt, and cancer-causing petroleum and radioactive agents.

Weedsport's Jim Baker, who lives on the Seneca River, joined the protest. He was carrying a sign that read: "It's our water." Baker said he is most concerned about the wastewater contaminating the river and his well water.

"We're drinking the same water the dinosaurs drank. If we don't take care of our water where are we going with it?" he said.

Both Quill, a Democrat who is seeking reelection this fall, and Timothy Lattimore, his Republican opponent, support halting the city practice of taking the wastewater. Quill said he plans to ask city councilors to approve enacting a ban in the next couple weeks.

Walter Hang, whose Ithaca-based company Toxics Targeting keeps a database on industrial and municipal pollution, attended the protest and urged the group to keep up the fight.

"Keep slugging, stop this practice right now," Hang said to cheers from the group.