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# Drill wastewater being used on roads

## Hang questions DEC-sanctioned maintenance practice

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Several New York municipalities — including communities in Chemung, Broome and Tompkins counties — are using contaminated wastewater from natural gas drilling operations as part of their road and high-

way maintenance programs, according to an Ithaca-based environmental activist.

The state Department of Environmental Conservation sanctions the use of the wastewater, with restrictions, through a “beneficial use determination” program.

The wastewater is the fluid

that flows back to the surface through a well bore along with natural gas. The fluid often contains brine, heavy metals and radioactive materials, said Walter Hang, president of Toxics Targeting in Ithaca.

“The attitude is that it’s just salty water that comes up with the gas, but people are just go-

ing to be shocked that they were being exposed to the contaminated wastewater through DEC-sanctioned dumping programs without any comprehensive health assessment,” Hang said.

The DEC contends the use of the wastewater is safe for purposes such as keeping dust lev-

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» Tompkins routes were given OK for brine use.

### ON THE WEB

» To read the DEC letter, go to [ithacajournal.com](http://ithacajournal.com)

els down during road construction and as a de-icer in winter.

The wastewater it approves for “beneficial use” comes from

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