Dissident Senate Democrats Introduce Bill to Suspend Fracking

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A member of a dissident faction of Senate Democrats has introduced legislation that would put a a 24-month moratorium on the form of natural gas drilling known as hydraulic fracturing, pending the outcome of major health studies into the practice.

Sen. David Carlucci, who is a member of the Independent Democratic Conference representing Rockland and Westchester counties, announced Tuesday that he had introduced the bill.

“A quick buck is not worth the long-term debt that our children will have to live with if we get this decision wrong," Carlucci said in a statement. "Rushing to judgment without all of the facts is a recipe for a disaster, particularly involving a hydrofracking process that lacks transparency and accountability, and has appeared to pose significant harmful health effects towards populations surrounding the Marcellus Shale. I cannot in good conscience support any measure that does not first fully evaluate all related scientific data, and that is precisely what we are advocating for here today. Let’s get the facts at our disposal before we launch into unchartered territory.”

Sen. Jeff Klein had similar reservations: "As I've said before, I have serious concerns about the process. These studies will provide the Department of Health with a much clearer sense of whether or not hydrofracking can ever be conducted safely."

A release from Carlucci's office notes that three major studies into hydrofracking are ongoing: One on the impacts on drinking water resources by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; a Geisinger Health System of Pennsylvania study on the health histories of hundreds of thousands of people who live near natural gas wells on the Marcellus Shale that covers parts of New York as well as Pennsylvania; and a study of health impacts led by academic researchers.

The bill comes shortly after The Associated Press reported that Gov. Andrew Cuomo was convinced to hold off on allowing fracking in New York State after conversations with

Robert Kennedy Jr., who said he believes Cuomo is waiting for for the outcome of the $1 million Geisinger study.

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Robert Kennedy