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## Groups urge hold on drilling permits

### Staff Report

Two Otsego County environmental groups have called for a moratorium on new drilling for natural gas until concerns are addressed.

The Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society has urged Gov. David Paterson to enact a state moratorium ``until environmental and health concerns are addressed in a (state-led) Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement."

In an Aug. 25 letter to Paterson, DOAS President Tom Salo wrote that "with the rapid pace of gas exploration ... major damage could be done to New York's ground and surface waters, and other natural resources."

The letter continued, "Without rigorous oversight and strictly enforced regulations, localities may be left with untreated waste lagoons, contaminated groundwater, and polluted streams and other waterways. Overdrawn aquifers and surface waters are also a great concern."

The Otsego County Conservation Association also passed a formal resolution and sent a letter to Paterson asking for a moratorium on all permits for natural-gas drilling.

The move asked that the state Department of Environmental Conservation stop granting permits until a supplemental GEIS has been adopted as part of the state's environmental quality review.

The Catskill Mountainkeeper, a nonprofit advocacy group, has sent similar letters to the governor.

"We have a wave of land-disturbing activity not previously carried out in our county \_ activity which may also have an impact on ground water and aquifers," said OCCA President Martha Clarvoe, who signed the letter. "It seems like common sense not to allow horizontal drilling for natural gas to proceed until regulations and policies are in place."

The Aug. 14 letter expressed concerns about the potential effects on the Susquehanna River, the New York City watershed, Catskill Park, the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River and other sensitive areas.