

To the editor:

OCCA agrees with the Daily Star's Oct. 1 editorial, "Drilling task force would help," dealing with a proposal to form a gas-drilling task force to "assess the ability of Otsego County to meet the emerging infrastructure needs as gas drilling progresses and help the various entities develop plans for meeting those additional needs."

County Board Chair James Powers has reservations about having adequate resources to staff such a committee. We understand his concern, but not taking advantage of the minimal resources we do have and allowing things to move ahead with no planning whatsoever will only cost us more in the long term. The county also has the (sometimes untapped) "resources" of concerned residents and organizations who have compiled much information on gas drilling and are willing to offer their time free of charge to ensure that we are adequately prepared for eventualities associated with gas drilling.

Powers also stated that regulation falls to the NYSDEC rather than Otsego County, but it is ill advised for us to displace responsibility. I refer readers to our Aug. 2, 2008 opinion piece "Is the DEC up to the task?" – available on the Daily Star and OCCA websites – addressing DEC's unpreparedness to deal with gas drilling.

Rep. Stephen Fournier stated, "What worries me ... is that it (the task force) might be stacked with people who all have the same opinion." That worries us too, but his committee would appoint task force members, therefore having control over its make-up.

Gas drilling presents many environmental concerns. It does not behoove us to shrink from the responsibility of addressing them. Planning is proactive, not obstructive. It is appropriate that the county Solid Waste and *Environmental Concerns* committee form a task force to deal with an issue that could change the face of Otsego County.

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