

# Anti-fracking activists turn out in Albany

By Jon Campbell

Albany Bureau

ALBANY — A few thousand opponents of hydraulic fracturing for natural gas rallied on the steps of the state Capitol Monday while a new public-opinion poll suggests they're gaining traction.

A Siena College survey released Monday found 44 percent of New York voters do not support allowing hydrofracking in the Marcellus Shale, compared to 37 percent in favor. Outside of New York City and its suburbs, 52 percent oppose fracking and 38 percent support it, according to the poll.

It was a slight shift from surveys over the past three years that have consistently shown voters are split on the is-

sue, including a Siena survey in May that showed 41 percent opposed state-wide and 39 percent in favor.

"A majority of upstate and plurality of New York City voters oppose fracking, while a plurality of downstate suburbanites want to see fracking move forward," said Steven Greenberg, a Siena pollster.

Meanwhile, busloads of anti-fracking activists piled outside of the east side of the Capitol to push the state Senate to pass a two-year moratorium on fracking in New York. The state has yet to allow the technique used with gas drilling, pending the completion of an in-depth environmental review by the departments of Health and Environmen-

See FRACKING, Page 4B

## Fracking

Continued from Page 3B

tal Conservation.

"We are calling on the state leaders, all of them here, to reject fracking and lead the nation in developing renewable energy, so that our water, our land and air remain clean and safe for generations to come," said former Rep. Maurice Hinchey, D-Hurley, Ulster County, who was one of the featured speakers at the rally.

Supporters of fracking, a process in which water, sand and chemicals are injected underground to break apart shale formations and release natural gas, knocked the protesters for relying on theatrics to get their message across.

The New York State

Petroleum Council, which represents the gas industry, helped Monday to gather a handful of landowners in Albany, who said they're struggling to pay their property taxes as the Cuomo administration weighs whether to allow fracking.

"I came up because I'm a landowner and I don't want to see the state or the government take my constitutional rights away," said Sandra Davis, a 33-year-old landowner in Deposit, Delaware County. "Our mineral rights are in tact with our property rights, and it's frustrating to see politicians take our rights away."

The Cuomo administration has not signaled when it will be making a decision after delaying one several times. The Assembly has passed a bill that would implement a two-year moratorium on shale-gas drilling, while a

similar bill hasn't gained traction in the upper chamber.

In a Monday interview on *The Capitol Pressroom*, a public-radio program, Cuomo said he believes the measure would have enough Senate support to pass, but didn't signal whether he would sign it if passed.

Senate Deputy GOP Leader Thomas Libous, R-Binghamton, said last week that he doesn't believe his house will take the moratorium up before the legislative session ends Thursday.

"I just don't see our house getting too excited about that," Libous, a fracking booster, said last week. "On the whole fracking issue, the governor is going to decide that."

JCAMPBELL1@gannett.com  
Twitter.com/JonCampbellGAN