

ROCK BUSINESS

Cuomo: No rush to decide fracking

Jessica Bakeman
Albany bureau

ALBANY — Gov. Andrew Cuomo said Monday there are no immediate plans for a decision on whether to allow hydraulic fracturing in New York, and he expects lawsuits to follow the decision either way.

The state Department of Environmental Conservation is expected to issue a final determination on whether high-volume hydrofracking, a natural gas extraction technique, can be done safely. There has been much speculation over when the decision would be announced.

During an interview on an Albany radio station Monday, Cuomo said he isn't going to pressure the state agency into making the decision by a certain date, such as the Nov. 6 elections or by the end of the year.

"When it's done, and when they're prepared, that's when we'll announce the decision," he said.

"And remember, the announcing of the decision is not going to be the conclusion," Cuomo continued. "I promise you there will be lawsuits, whatever the decision is. So the day right after the decision, there will be another press conference that says, 'Now we're going to step two, which is a series of legal challenges and political challenges, and we're going to try to get federal legislation and state legislation.'"

"It's going to be an ongoing situation for a long, long time," he said.

Reports have indicated that Cuomo may pursue a limited amount of hydrofracking in the Southern Tier, but he has denied that any decision has been made. He has said that community sentiment should play a role, indicating he won't force hydrofracking on an area that doesn't want it but would be more favorably disposed if a community supports the controversial process.

Environmental advocates agree that the decision shouldn't be rushed, but

See FRACKING, Page 6B

Fracking

Continued from Page 5B

those who would like to see the state go forward with hydrofracking feel they've waited long enough.

Brian Smith, spokesman for Citizens Campaign for the Environment, said the issue should be carefully considered, and the decision should be based on science, not politics.

"DEC should take as long as needed to review the extensive technical input that was provided by the public and expert

stakeholders during the comment period," he said. "The rush to drill must not outweigh the need to protect public health, our environment, and economy from the inherent risks of industrial gas drilling."

Cherie Messore, spokeswoman for the Independent Oil and Gas Association of New York, said delays have already cost the state billions of dollars in economic benefit, as well as tens of thousands of jobs. Messore said other states are benefiting from New York's hesitancy to begin drilling.

"Our members just

"And remember, the announcing of the decision is not going to be the conclusion. I promise you there will be lawsuits."

GOV. ANDREW CUOMO

want to earn a living," she said. "New York's continued delay comes at a real cost: real jobs, real people, real companies. So it's not just a missed opportunity, it's a risk of losing a whole industry."

JBAKEMAN@Gannett.com
Twitter.com/jessicabakeman