

## DEC official on fracking decision: 'There isn't a timeframe at this point'

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Sep. 6, 2013 |

democratandchronicle.com

**ALBANY** — A high-ranking official in the state Department of [Environmental](#)

Conservation declined to estimate when a decision on hydraulic fracturing may come down, telling lawmakers Friday that there “isn’t a timeframe at this point.”

Anne Reynolds, the DEC’s deputy commissioner for administration, told the Assembly Environmental Conservation Committee that the agency continues to review comments it received on a 2011 draft review of fracking, a 1,500-page document known as the Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement, or SGEIS.

Reynolds testified on behalf of the DEC at a hearing held by the legislative committee Friday. The state agency first started its review of fracking more than five years ago.

“There isn’t a timeframe at this point,” Reynolds said. “As you know, you’ve heard before that we’ve received over 100,000 comments from the public. The department is still reviewing those comments, developing responses and developing any changes to the SGEIS in response.”

A decision on whether to allow large-scale fracking in New York awaits the DEC finalizing the SGEIS. The hotly debated technique, hailed as an economy booster by proponents and knocked as a potential threat to the [environment](#)

by critics, is used to help extract gas from shale formations such as the Marcellus Shale, which covers New York’s Southern Tier.

The SGEIS won’t be finalized, however, until the Department of Health completes its own review of the document, a process that was launched a year ago. While state Health Commissioner Nirav Shah said in January and February that his work would be completed within weeks, it remains unfinished.

When asked if she had any information on when the Department of Health may finish its work, Reynolds said: “I don’t.”

“Both DEC and the Department of Health are committed to not moving ahead with fracking until that’s finished and until we’re satisfied that it can be conducted in New York in a way that’s [protective](#)

of the environment and public health,” Reynolds said.