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My name is Hilary Baum. I would like to thank the Environmental Protection Committee, especially Council Member Koppell who represents my district, for the opportunity to present this testimony.

I am testifying on behalf of Food Systems Network NYC ([www.foodsystemsnyc.org](http://www.foodsystemsnyc.org)), of which I am a founding board member. The Network is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to ensuring universal access to nutritious, safe food and the viability of our regional farm and food economy. Founded in 2004, our organization's members are from business, government agencies and organizations involved in all phases of the food system.

I was also an advisor to the Speaker's FoodWorks initiative; I am a member of the Bronx Food and Sustainability Coalition, and director of Baum Forum ([www.baumforum.org](http://www.baumforum.org)), a not-for-profit producer of public programs on critical food and farming issues including a conference in May on food, fracking, and the green economy.

We want to draw your attention to a glaring omission in the state's SGEIS on fracking. The state has failed to adequately consider the impact of fracking on the food and farming economy of New York State, and, by extension, the food supply to New York City residents. We fear the widespread use of fracking will endanger farmland through environmental degradation, fragmentation, and lease of dwindling farm acreage. Additionally, high volume water use and potential for water, soil and air pollution are in direct competition with sustaining our farming economy. The 28 counties that overlie the Marcellus shale currently boast over 20,000 farms, 4 million farm acres, and \$2.4 billion in farm revenue, more than half the statewide farm economy.

We are concerned that this critical omission in the SGEIS will continue the misapprehension that fracking and farming can somehow be compatible. The impacts on agriculture – including the health of farm families, crops, animals, and wild life – have been described and documented by farmers, scientists, retailers and advocates. There is also widespread concern that fracking in NY's food producing areas will result in creating a damaging and irreversible stigma to the food sourced

from this area, and the loss of hard won organic and other certifications. I will provide some resources and references for the record along with my testimony.

New York City has made tremendous strides in linking our upstate farmers to the city. This Council just passed legislation to help agencies procure more local food, provides funding for residents to use their food stamp benefits and NYC Health Bucks at farmers markets throughout the city, and has even started a weekly CSA. There are countless organizations doing similar efforts – through farmers markets, csa's, bringing produce and other products into schools, pantries and soup kitchens, restaurants and stores. This has been good for both NYC and upstate communities, providing access to affordable and nutritious food, supporting farmers and food producers, and securing our regional food system. We can't afford to let these advances in the ag and food economy slip away.

We urge the City Council to not just think about protecting NYC's watershed but to think about protecting NYC's regional foodshed that extends through most of NY's threatened southern tier; our regional food and farming economy; and the future of our food system. We ask that you pass a resolution and lobby the state to:

- Extend the comment period and not fast track the rulemaking process.
- Withhold any permits until a comprehensive impact study on the effects of fracking on our regional food supply and agriculture be undertaken and published as part of the SGEIS.

And we ask you to consider several additional weaknesses in the SGEIS and the comment process which our organization will outline in a forthcoming paper. We would be pleased to provide assistance in educating council member and staff about this subject and making materials available.

#### Selected Resources

##### Fracking and Farming

<http://www.catskillmountainkeeper.org/node/2657>

##### What Will Fracking Do to Your Food Supply?

<http://www.gilttaste.com/stories/327>

##### Farmer's Get Fracked

<http://www.valleytable.com/article.php?article=002+Features%2FFarmers+get+fracked>

##### Fracking Cattle

<http://markbittman.com/fracking-cattle>

Fracking in The Foodshed

<https://acrobat.com/app.html#d=RE-gWpS33h7fE1A5ic0iwg>