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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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### **Sullivan County Hosts Public Forums on “Understanding Gas Drilling”**

Monticello – County Manager David P Fanslau announced today that the Sullivan County Legislature will present a series of public forums on natural gas development of the Marcellus Shale within Sullivan County and the surrounding region. “This three-part series of panel discussions is being organized by the Sullivan County Division of Planning and Environmental Management and was developed with input from a community advisory group that included representatives from various stakeholder groups – business, local government, environmental groups and citizens with a range of perspectives on this issue,” said Fanslau.

**This series of Public Forums, “Understanding Gas Drilling,” will take place at Monticello High School, 237 Route 42 in Monticello, NY, on the following dates: Tuesday – June 29, Thursday – July 15, and Thursday – August 19. All events run from 5:45 PM to 8:30 PM, are free and open to the public.**

Each session will be comprised of a panel of experts followed by time for questions from the public. These events are geared to all members of the community. Anyone interested in learning more about gas drilling, how it affects our region and the status of regulations in New York State should attend. “The goal for these public forums is to present a balanced picture of what can be expected from gas drilling in Sullivan County and how we as citizens should be informed and prepared for the choices that lie ahead,” says Sullivan County Legislature Chairman Jonathan F. Rouis.

“This series is intended to benefit residents of Sullivan County who might be considering signing a gas lease for their land as well as others with general concerns about how drilling will take

place and what effects natural gas development could have on the environment. Panelists will address issues affecting both individual property owners – whether and how to lease – and the broader community, for example the prospects for job growth in the local economy and the potential for increased demands on municipal services, said Luiz C. Aragon, Commissioner of Planning and Environmental Management.

Each of the three events is designed to address a different set of topics through a panel of professional experts and others with relevant experience.

The first Public Forum, scheduled for **Tuesday, June 29**, will cover “Property and Landowner Issues.” Panelists include **Chris Denton**, an **attorney** from Elmira, New York, who specializes in representing property owners and landowner coalitions in negotiations over the technical terms of natural gas leases. **Bradd Vickers**, President of the **Chenango County Farm Bureau**, has spoken, written and worked extensively with farmers in Central New York on the issues landowners need to consider in signing a gas lease. Both Denton and Vickers participated in a panel organized by the Division of Planning at Sullivan West High School in August 2008. **Todd Mathes**, an **attorney** with the Albany law firm of **Whiteman Osterman and Hanna, LLP**, specializes in environmental and municipal law in New York State. He has written on the complexities involved in local governments exercising home-rule powers with regard to natural gas development, from managing town roads to limited zoning and land use controls.

The second Public Forum, scheduled for **Thursday, July 15**, is sub-titled, “Environmental and Health Concerns.” The panel of speakers will examine potential health and environmental risks associated with natural gas development, the state of current New York State regulations, and industry practices designed to mitigate potential hazards. Panelists include **Dr. Anthony R. Ingraffea**, the Dwight C. Baum **Professor of Engineering** at **Cornell University**, who has researched and analyzed the fracturing processes involved in gas shale deposits. **Dr. Adam Law, MD**, a specialist in endocrinology and metabolic medicine and **President** of the Medical Staff at **Cayuga Medical Center** in Ithaca, New York, will present his concerns over the lack of information regarding risks to human endocrine and metabolic function contained in New York State’s draft Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement (DSGEIS) covering natural gas development in the Marcellus Shale. **Kate Sinding**, an **attorney** and **Deputy Director of Urban East Program** of the **Natural Resources Defense Council**, will provide an analysis of the proposed environmental regulations contained in the DSGEIS. **Paul Hartman, Director of Government Relations** in New York State for **Chesapeake Energy Corporation** will speak to his company’s approach to mitigating risks through drilling practices and other operations that comprise the natural gas extraction process.

The third Public Forum, scheduled for **Thursday, August 19**, will focus on “Economic and Community Impacts,” exploring the diverse predictions and empirical data on economic “gain” and “strain” among communities that have experienced natural gas development, most recently in the northeast but also over the past decade and longer in western states. Speakers include **Jannette Barth**, an **economist** with her own consulting firm, **J.M. Barth & Associates** of Croton-on-Hudson, who has examined potential economic gains and unforeseen costs in New York and Pennsylvania. **Anthony J. Ventello, Executive Director** of **Progress Authority of Bradford and Susquehanna Counties**, based in Towanda, Pennsylvania, oversees economic

development programs for this two-county region experiencing rapid growth of natural gas exploration and extraction. **Jeffrey Jacquet** is a Ph. D. candidate in the **Department of Natural Resources** at **Cornell University**; he is a member of Cornell Cooperative Extension's "Marcellus Shale Team" and has examined regional economic trends related to natural gas development in Wyoming, Texas and most recently north-central Pennsylvania. **Craig Sautner**, a **resident of Dimmock, Pennsylvania**, will speak from direct experience on his community's challenges with gas drilling.

All three of these sessions will be moderated by **Planning Commissioner Luiz C. Aragon** and will provide an opportunity for the public to ask questions of the panelists.

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**For additional information, contact the Sullivan County Division of Planning and Environmental Management, Tel. 845-807-0527, or Email: [planning@co.sullivan.ny.us](mailto:planning@co.sullivan.ny.us)**