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A legal, alternative method of fracking in NYS

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Town of Barton, NY (WBNG Binghamton) While hydraulic-fracturing has been banned in New York State, there is an alternative to extract natural gas from shale. Action News visited Tioga County where one group hopes to be the first to frack with propane.

"This country is addicted to energy," said Kevin Frisbie, spokesperson for the Snyder Farm Group.

Frisbie believes natural gas is the next major source for that energy.

"150 years ago it was coal. Coal has been iron-horsed for a long time, powered a lot of energy. It went from coal to oil. Oil is clearer than coal but it's not nearly as clean as natural gas," said Frsibie.

The Snyder Farm Group wants to use propane fracturing to drill for natural gas. Instead of water used in hydraulic-fracturing, gelled propane and sand are used to release natural gases in shale.

The natural gas collection will take place beneath 53 acres of land owned by the Snyder Farm Group, but will only temporarily disturb 3.5 surface acres while the well is drilled. After the well becomes operational, the Snyder Farm Group says less than one acre of surface area will be required for the project.

"It is safer, I mean even though water is safe, there are a million wells operating in this country today and you barely hear an incident of it," Frisbie said. "But this we believe is safe. It's a higher standard. And since we are the five land owners involved in this group, and it's our land -- it's right next to our homes, our houses, our farms, our barns and our cattle. We wanted the higher standard."

Snyder Farm Group teamed up with Tioga Energy Partners LLC to seek approval from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. An application was submitted Tuesday to request to set up and begin drilling on Hamilton Valley Road in the town of Barton.

The DEC told Action News it will review the application soon but it could take several weeks until there's a decision.

"This is a process to prove a point that we can get drilling in New York State safely. We need to get that mind set back in. That's what made this country a great country," said Frisbie.

The Snyder Farm Group says this method of fracturing could bring more jobs and an economic boost to the Southern Tier. It said gelled propane technology has already been successfully deployed at more than 800 operations in North America.

A spokesperson for Save the Southern Tier calls the idea of propane fracking reckless, questioning the use of one explosive fossil fuel to extract another.