Communities damaged

In order to frack, companies bring in heavy equipment to carry out the drilling and extraction processes. Truck traffic day and night wears down local roads and creates enormous air and noise pollution. Much of the equipment runs on diesel fuel and is noisy and smelly, and is yet another source of emissions. For example, each well per frack requires 2 – 8 million gallons of water. This equals “200 to 300 tanker truckloads of liquid waste from the well. An eighteen-wheeler weighs up to 80,000 lbs. Day-in, day-out, these trucks destroy roads and bridges, leaving towns to clean up the mess.”11 From site development to rig construction to drilling and production, a frack well requires about 895 – 1,350 truck trips.12

Towns and communities do not genuinely prosper from the presence of fracking. Although there is increased commercial activity and tax revenue, there is also stress on schools, police and hospitals. The sudden influx of transient workers is unwelcome to many. The “boomtown effect” does not deserve to be equated with economic development. Local people suffer when rents increase during the boom, but property values later plummet because the land has been industrialized. Any tourist industry has been ravaged. Farmers may have given up; documented cases include rashes on cattle, abnormal chicks, fish with abnormal scales, and otherwise unexplained deaths of cattle, goats, chickens and horses. Those who could afford to leave may be long gone. When the wells stop producing, the frackers pack up and go somewhere else, taking with them any tax advantages.

There is an increasing body of journalistic and anecdotal evidence that increased crime rates, violence against women and prostitution increase in areas where fracking creates a sudden takeover of the local economy. It also contributes to high divorce rates among transient fracking field workers, increased addiction and drug use.13 The lifestyle in the now-notorious “man-camps” where fracking workers live is damaging for them as well as for the communities they descend upon. It is likely that studies will be forthcoming in the near future to substantiate with data what many already know to be true.14

12 http://www.dec.ny.gov/energy/58440.html
13 Klein, Naomi, This Changes Everything, p. 344.