

Washington, DC - Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today released the following statement regarding Congressman Michael Arcuri's (D-NY) successful effort to pass an amendment that would eliminate the special exemption that natural gas drillers have from the Clean Water Act's storm water runoff rules. The amendment was offered during markup by the U.S. House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee of H.R. 5629 - "Oil Spill Accountability and Environmental Protection Act of 2010." The special exemption for natural gas drillers was carved out in the 2005 Energy Policy Act, which Hinchey strongly opposed and voted against.

"I congratulate Congressman Arcuri for his successful committee amendment to eliminate the exemption that natural gas drillers have from the Clean Water Act storm water runoff rules. The inclusion of his amendment in the Oil Spill Accountability and Environmental Protection Act of 2010 represents the first successful effort to eliminate the special exemptions that were created for the industry in the 2005 Energy Policy Act, which I strongly opposed.

"This is a very positive sign for those who are concerned with the harmful risks to water resources posed by the hydraulic fracturing drilling process that is currently unregulated by the federal government. I look forward to working with Congressman Arcuri to ensure that this important amendment is made law, and I will continue working to pass additional legislation to close other loopholes and special carve outs that exempt big energy companies from the safe and clean drinking water rules that New Yorkers rely on for the security of their health and the protection of their homes and property."