



Andrew's endless stall

October 22, 2012

The Cuomo folks were at it again last week — pretending that the governor could possibly maybe one day allow fracking in this state.

On Friday, Department of Environmental Conservation boss Joe Martens admitted that experts set to review the “health impacts” of fracking (drilling for gas or oil in underground shale) have yet to be chosen.

But not to worry; they'll be picked “soon.”

Martens, of course, couldn't (wouldn't?) say exactly when they'd be on the job, let alone when they'd finish. (If ever.)

Oh, and if the review's not done by Nov. 29? Well, in that case, under state law, there'd have to be even more hearings . . .

Same old, same old.

Cuomo may not realize it, or maybe he doesn't care, but his credibility is being tested here, big-time.

And the message he's sending — that the economy and job-creation are not priorities for him — probably isn't lost on investors, businesses, job-seekers . . .

Which is not to say that he's oblivious.

He lashed out at two respectable fiscal watchdogs last week — the Tax Foundation and the Cato Institute — after they gave New York low grades for its business climate.

Cuomo dismissed the pair as excessively conservative.

“They tend to be right-wing groups who bring their philosophy to the table,” he said.

But on Thursday, New York's notoriously right-wing Labor Department reported that Empire State joblessness stood at 8.9 percent last month, more than a half-point higher than in September 2011 and more than a full point higher than the national rate.

Will Cuomo try to kill that messenger?

The fact is that potential investors aren't exactly in love with the sky-high taxes and miles of regulatory red tape that pass for normal in New York.

And that when Cuomo jacks up taxes — as he did last December, after vowing (Read my lips!) not to — it makes the state even less economically attractive.

Upstate, where fracking would pay real dividends, continues to hemorrhage jobs: Friday, HMX — which owns Hickey Freeman, a 500-job manufacturer of men's suits based in Rochester — filed for bankruptcy.

Last month, Sikorsky Aircraft said it will close its Chemung County facility, costing 570 jobs. GM's shutting its Rochester-area fuel-cell plant, a loss of 220 jobs.

Fact is, Cuomo's endless stalls on fracking are of a piece with his tax hikes and the state's economically corrosive levies.

Taken together, they crystallize Cuomo's less-than-encouraging views toward businesses and the state's economy.

Alas, companies notice.

And act accordingly

Bad news for New York.