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ALBANY, N.Y. — New York's health department has named experts from George Washington University, the University of California Los Angeles and the Colorado School of Public Health to review the state's environmental study on shale gas development using hydraulic fracturing, a state official said.

The official spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the announcement had not been formally made.

Health and environmental groups have pressed for a comprehensive and independent health impact analysis before hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, is allowed. Environmental Conservation Commissioner Joe Martens rejected that request in September, saying state Health Commissioner Nirav Shah would do the review with help from outside experts.

The DEC faces a regulatory deadline of Nov. 29 to complete new regulations for fracking. Martens said the agency's proposals won't be finalized until Shah's health review is finished. If the deadline isn't met, the regulations may have to be reopened to public comment.

New York has had a moratorium on shale gas drilling since 2008, when regulators began an environmental review of fracking, which releases gas from rock by injecting a well with millions of gallons of chemically treated water.

Regulators contend that overall, water and air pollution problems related to gas drilling using hydraulic fracturing are rare, but environmental groups and some scientists say there hasn't been enough research on those issues.

The experts chosen for the health review were John Adgate, chairman of the Environmental and Occupational Health Department at the Colorado School of Public Health; Lynn Goldman, dean of George Washington University's School of Public Health and Health Services; and

Richard Jackson, chairman of the Department of Environmental Health Sciences at the University of California Los Angeles' Fielding School of Public Health.

Environmental groups criticized the state agencies for not making public the DEC health review that the outside experts will be evaluating.

"We continue to call on the state to perform a comprehensive public Health Impact Assessment," said Katherine Nadeau of Environmental Advocates. "And to ensure the credibility of this study, strongly encourage the administration and the governor's appointees to undertake a more open and transparent process that fully involves the public."

A letter signed by 91 health professionals and scientists was sent to Gov. Andrew Cuomo on Thursday saying there's no indication the health department's review will meet the standards of a full health impact assessment.

"New York's community of medical professionals reiterate our call for an independent, comprehensive health impact assessment," Dr. Andrew Coates of Albany Medical College said in a statement. "Nothing less than a transparent investigation with full public participation is acceptable."