

I suspect that Cuomo has no political courage when it comes to the big national issues. He appears to stay isolated in his own tightly controlled world catering to pet special interest groups. The pain of his upstate landowner constituency is not felt in the least. I do wonder if he understands the nature of the changing tides both in global warming and election potential. JLCpulse

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If New York wants to help America toward its energy “golden age,” it had best get cracking on fracking.

On today's PostScript pages, Julian Borger and Larry Elliott note the stakes: US shale oil and gas, and the fairly new process to harvest them called hydraulic fracturing, or “fracking,” are set to make America energy-self-sufficient in short order.

Indeed, the country may well become a world leader in energy production — a historic shift that will throw the geopolitical order on its head, strengthening America economically *and* politically.

“Exploitation of fields in states such as West Virginia and Pennsylvania,” the authors note, “have transformed the US's energy outlook pretty much overnight.

“If all the known [US] shale gas resources were developed to their commercial potential . . . production could more than quadruple over the next two decades.”

It's just a matter of time, they suggest, that a self-reliant United States would have the world knocking on its door for energy.

The economic perks alone are huge.

Borger and Elliott cite fracking's "direct impact on production and employment," adding that the new industry-within-an-industry is "likely to support 600,000 jobs by the end of the decade."

A number of states — most notably, New York's neighbor, Pennsylvania — are already seeing boom times from fracking.

Alas, not New York. And it's not for want of the gas and oil gold within its borders: No, the state's Southern Tier is believed to hold some 20 percent of the roughly *300 trillion to 500 trillion* cubic feet of gas reserves in the Marcellus Shale region.

That's a lot of gas. And jobs.

And energy output.

The problem? In a word: leadership.

With one eye on enviro-purists, who oppose the process, and the other on his political dreams, Gov. Cuomo can't pull the trigger and OK fracking once and for all.

Instead, he's let Department of Conservation chief Joseph Martens erect roadblock after roadblock to delay approval, in perpetuity.

Last week, the state Health Department finally named experts to examine "health impact" data from a fracking study the state supposedly finished long ago. (And never mind that federal studies have *also* long deemed the enterprise safe.)

Yet, if the latest analysis and new fracking regulations aren't ready by Nov. 29, the issue may

have to go through a whole new round of public comment — extending the state's current fracking ban even longer.

Which brings us back to Borger and Elliott's implicit point: More delay won't just mean the loss of thousands of jobs to an upstate New York region desperate for them; it could also slow America's emergence as an international energy powerhouse, no longer dependent on foreign oil.

Question is: Does Cuomo care about *any* of that?