Kyle Smith on January 12,2012 in NY Post

## Hollywood stars are using scare tactics to stop fracking — but they have neither science, economics nor sense on their side

Fifty years or so after coffee became popular in Sweden, King Gustav III decided to take extreme action against this menace to the public health. In 1746, the monarch issued a royal edict warning citizens of the obvious dangers of this known poison. First he heavily taxed coffee, then he banned it outright. People kept drinking it anyway.

To turn the public against the caffeine threat once and for all, he ordered up an experiment involving two identical twins, both of them condemned prisoners. One would be forced to drink three pots of tea a day; the other, three pots of coffee. Two doctors were assigned to supervise. One doctor died. The other doctor died. Poor King Gustav himself was assassinated. At length the tea drinker died, at age 83. The coffee drinker? He survived them all. The coffee ban kept getting renewed anyway, until the 1820s.



Bill, a New York dairy farmer featured in "FrackNation," says that fracking will save his farm from having to be divided and sold.

Fracking looks more and more like the coffee of the 21st century.

Everyone knows that hydraulic fracturing to release natural gas from shale deposits far beneath's the earth's surface is evil. It's poisoning the water supply, it's killing the cattle and it's making cancer rates spike.

Except no one can show that any of these claims are true. When a study comes up negative, though, it leads only to . . . more studies. Because "We can't find anything wrong with it" can't be the right answer.

Thanks to Gov. Gustav III — er, I mean Gov. Cuomo II — the moratorium placed on fracking in New York state in 2008 remains in effect. Other US areas have halted fracking as well, while study after study concludes the process is safe. The EPA. The state environmental regulators.

Meanwhile, cheap, abundant, relatively clean and job-creating energy sloshes around in an ocean right beneath our feet — there is enough domestic gas to power the US for 110 years — as the Saudi sheiks and Vladimir Putin laugh at us. The Department of Energy has estimated that if the transportation sector switched to natural gas, we could reduce carbon-monoxide emissions by at least 90%, carbon-dioxide emissions by 25% and nitrogen-oxide emissions by perhaps 60%. Even Mayor Bloomberg has come out in support of fracking. Which means it must be less dangerous than trans fats.

Yet all you really need to know about how the game has changed for energy issues is these two words: "secret report."

Remember when "secret report" led you to a story about some nefarious oilmen who had successfully covered up all of their toxic misdeeds, all the seagulls and trout their greed had killed? Last week, we learned of a "secret report" into fracking that was produced by the state of New York's Health Department and somehow kept under wraps for a year before it leaked out. The secret was: Fracking is safe.