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## **timesunion.com : Cuomo's chance: A clean future for N.Y.**

There are moments when pivotal public policy decisions are made that define our collective future. There are decision makers that are placed in a position of power in those moments. Whether this is due to fate, serendipity, or manipulation, the fact is the time is now, the matter at hand is hydraulic fracturing for gas in New York and the decision maker is Gov. Andrew Cuomo.

The question is: Will he be like Abraham Lincoln delivering the Gettysburg Address? Or will he be Dwight Eisenhower resigning to what he dubbed the "military industrial complex" as he left office?

As Cuomo readies his announcement regarding whether New York will be opened to fracking, he must realize he is telling us who he is and what he envisions to be New York's future.

Next door in Pennsylvania, where the gas industry has free rein, policymakers drone on about economics. Never mind that such bubble economics are not sustainable, provide at best short-term, dangerous, and dirty jobs for a fraction of the work force and that long-term employment with sustainable economies are eliminated.

The unvarnished truth is that the ruined health of residents and workers and the loss of a healthy environment from the inescapable and permanent air, water and foodshed pollution caused by fracking is turning whole states into sacrifice zones that will burden all of us with costs that the gas and oil industry can dodge but the public cannot.

This has been carefully arranged by energy corporations over time, with the cooperation of elected officials and policymakers marching across the nation to New York.

Standing in their way are two targeted geographic regions where fracking has not commenced — New York and the Delaware River Watershed. Both are under a moratorium while it is being decided if fracking should

be allowed where almost 10 percent of America's population gets their drinking water and so many people live. Cuomo's decision will affect New York and, as a voting member of the Delaware River Basin Commission — the agency that is in charge of the Delaware River's water — could break the stalemate that has kept drilling at bay in the Delaware River portions of Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey and Delaware.

That brings us back to Lincoln and Eisenhower. How respectable it would have been for Lincoln to accept Justice Taney's Dred Scott decision, but he struck out with a new vision — one that recognized that all men are created equal and that a democratic nation must evolve toward justice or it will collapse on itself. Eisenhower tragically fell under the weight of what he warned was a new world order, accepting that it was unbeatable.

Cuomo must see that he is not bound by the compromised policies of others, no matter what the rest of the nation is doing. New York can stride forward with a new vision of a clean, sustainable energy future without shale gas that supports healthy communities and a thriving natural environment.

Cuomo can be a Lincoln or an Eisenhower. If he stands up for clean water and communities by saying "no" to fracking, we'll be there to support him and history will prove him righteous, just like Lincoln.

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