

LONG ISLAND

Nassau OKs ban on fracking waste

BY JENNIFER BARRIOS

jennifer.barrios@newsday.com

Nassau County this week joined Suffolk in banning the use and sale of liquid waste from hydraulic fracturing within its borders, effectively creating an islandwide ban of the substance.

The measure, which passed the Nassau County Legislature unanimously on Wednesday, bans waste products from the hydraulic-fracturing process — used to extract natural gas from underground rock formations using pressure, water and chemicals — from being used, sold, applied and imported into the county.

It also keeps products that contain the material from being sold in Nassau County.

The penalty for violating the measure is \$25,000, 30 days in jail, or both, in addition to possible civil penalties.

Previously, Nassau had only banned the waste from being deposited into sewage-treatment plants in the county.

Legis. Delia DeRiggi-Whitton (D-Glen Cove), who introduced the measure, said she was concerned about the possibility of the chemical-laden waste seeping into the region's underground aquifer system, the sole source of Long Island's drinking water.

"We have to be conscious of the fact that under the ground is our water," DeRiggi-Whitton said.

The legislator said her office worked with Port Washington nonprofit Grassroots Environmental Education on the legislation.

"Arguably we have one of the most fragile public-water supplies in the state, maybe even in the country," said Patti Wood, the group's executive director. "To bring in a poisonous or hazardous waste product would really spell disaster for our water supply."

In April, the Suffolk County Legislature passed a measure banning the sale and use of hydraulic-fracturing byproducts in that county, with a maximum penalty for violations of \$5,000 and 30 days in jail.

"There are too many unknowns with regard to fracking wastewater," said Suffolk County Legis. William Spencer (D-Centerport), who sponsored that legislation.

Last month, concerned that Suffolk's penalties were too low, Spencer introduced new legislation that would increase the maximum penalty for violations of the law to \$25,000, bringing the county's penalty in line with other municipalities that have passed similar bans.