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Contacts:

Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper, Delaware Riverkeeper Network, 215-369-1188 ext. 102

Delaware Communities and Organizations turn out in Opposition to Recent Attacks on the Coastal Zone Act

Dozens of community leaders testified before Delaware Assembly committee against controversial HB 190

Dover, DE- On June 7, 2017, at 5:30 pm the Delaware House Committee on Natural Resources met to discuss HB 190 before a full room in the House Chamber. The bill, recently proposed by Representative Osienski and others, contains drastic amendments to the Coastal Zone Act, a statute designed to “protect the natural environment of [the] bay and coastal areas” and to “safeguard their use primarily for recreation and tourism.” The amendments would allow new heavy industry and bulk product transfer facilities in the Delaware Coastal Zone and allow multiple heavy industries to be sited in unprecedented proximity to one another. According to opponents to the bill who testified at the meeting, these amendments would overall weaken the protection of Delaware’s pristine coastline and ecosystem which could jeopardize the hundreds of millions of dollars Delaware receives via tourism. The Committee voted to release the bill out of Committee despite the fact that the majority of testifiers voiced strong opposition to the bill.

At the meeting, in testimony delivered on her behalf, Maya van Rossum stated that “the bill is a rollback in protection that is neither needed nor wanted from an ecological, economic, public health, or safety perspective. The Delaware Riverkeeper Network is opposed to passage of HB 190. We stand with our members, our colleagues in the Delaware environmental community, and Delawareans across the state urging you to withdraw the bill.” Other community members and environmental organizations also testified in opposition to the bill, asking for HB 190 to be withdrawn and that

DELAWARE RIVERKEEPER NETWORK
925 Canal Street, Suite 3701
Bristol, PA 19007
Office: (215) 369-1188
fax: (215) 369-1181
dm@delawareriverkeeper.org
www.delawareriverkeeper.org

legislators instead advance a proposal to thoroughly study the environmental and economic benefits of the Coastal Zone Act as it stands today and to include in this review a robust public process that well engages all aspects of Delaware's communities.

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Delaware Riverkeeper Network (DRN) is a nonprofit membership organization working throughout the four states of the Delaware River Watershed including Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware and New York. DRN provides effective environmental advocacy, volunteer monitoring programs, stream restoration projects, public education, and legal enforcement of environmental protection laws.