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Regional Groups Call for Ban on Fracking & Related Activities at Delaware River Basin Commission's First Public Hearing

Complete ban must also prohibit frack wastewater disposal and water export

Waymart, PA – Organizations from throughout the Delaware River Watershed testified in favor of a complete ban on fracking in the Delaware River Watershed at the Delaware River Basin Commission's first public hearing today. The groups called for the rejection of the DRBC's draft regulations, which would ban the act of fracking itself but still allow wastewater produced by fracking to be stored, processed, and discharged in the Watershed, as well as water from the basin to be exported for use in fracking elsewhere.

For more than a year, the groups (quotes below) have been advocating for the DRBC to enact a permanent and comprehensive fracking ban to protect the health and safety of all who live in the watershed, as well as the 15 million to 17 million people who depend on it for drinking water.

Today's is the first of DRBC hearings on the draft regulations that will be open to the public. Others will be held this Thursday, January 25, at the Doubletree by Hilton Hotel, Philadelphia Airport, at 1 p.m. and 6 p.m.

After an outpouring of public criticism of the extremely limited public process regarding the proposals, two more hearings were added by DRBC—one in Schnecksville, PA., on

Feb. 22, and another by phone on March 6. Concerned members of the public can find details to attend here:

http://www.nj.gov/drbc/home/newsroom/news/approved/20180108_newsrel_hydraulic-fracturing2.html.

The groups are also encouraging people to comment in writing to the DRBC about why they want a complete frack ban and the rejection of DRBC's draft fracking regulations by March 30, the close of the public comment period.

"The proposed ban on fracking correctly recognizes that the only way to prevent the known impacts of fracking is to not allow fracking in the Basin and this has to be extended to the toxic wastes from fracking that the DRBC is proposing to invite into the Basin," **said Barbara Arrindell, Director of Damascus Citizens for Sustainability.**

"Because of the health impacts of drilling, science won the day in New York and we banned the practice of high volume fracking for our communities. There may still be a few desperate people wishing they could get a lump sum payment for a gas lease but thousands of people across the region and beyond are speaking out to protect this incredibly clean river and the surrounding landscape that keeps that water clean. Today we are here to say we do not want fracking anywhere in the Basin or the impacts of waste water and water withdrawals here. Waste water from Fracking is a bizarre mix of chemicals and pollutants that any logical person realizes should not be released in a river," **said Wes Gillingham, Associate Director, Catskill Mountainkeeper.**

"The proposed fracking ban is historic—but these draft regulations undermine its impact by continuing to put drinking water at risk," **said Rob Friedman, Policy Advocate, Natural Resources Defense Council.** "While fracking would be off limits, the draft regulations allow for the disposal of toxic fracking wastewater in the region, as well as the removal of fresh water from the basin for fracking elsewhere. A true ban must not only keep fracking out of the Delaware River Basin, but all of the dangerous industrial activity that goes with it."

"No part of the Delaware River watershed should be considered worth more protecting than another. There shouldn't be any sacrifice zones along the Delaware," **said Doug O'Malley, Director of Environment New Jersey.** "The DRBC should enact a complete fracking and fracking wastewater ban so that no part of our watershed becomes a dumping ground."

"We're glad the DRBC is moving forward with a fracking ban for the Delaware River Basin. What we need them to do is have a complete fracking ban. It's not enough to stop the destructive process of fracking itself. We must also protect the region from the dumping of fracking waste or taking of water for fracking purposes. We want the DRBC to protect the Basin by banning all dangerous fracking activities in the entire basin," **said Jeff Tittel, Director of the New Jersey Sierra Club.** "The New Jersey Sierra Club joins Governor Murphy in supporting a complete ban to protect us from this dangerous process."

“Banning fracking but allowing frack waste in the Delaware River watershed puts the drinking water for millions of people at risk,” **said Junior Romero of Food & Water Watch.** “We are sending a clear message to the governors responsible for protecting the Delaware River watershed: Any deal that allows fracking companies to withdraw water, or permits companies to dump toxic, radioactive fracking waste into the watershed, should be rejected. We need a complete and comprehensive ban on fracking.”

“The mythical hydra grows two heads when one is cut off. The DRBC’s proposed regulations would have that same effect throughout the basin by banning fracking, but allowing fracking waste processing and extraction of water to threaten our communities instead. Same beast, different heads. A full fracking ban is the only way to stop this beast,” **said Karen Feridun, Founder, Berks Gas Truth.**

“All wells will fail. Some fracking wells might leak right away, others might take many years, but the fact of the matter is that what fracking represents is selling out the clean, healthy drinking water of current and future generations and that is simply unacceptable. It's 2018 and we have abundant wind and sunlight ready to power all of our energy needs, so there is truly no excuse for risking the drinking water of over 15 million people, including hundreds of thousands of Delawareans, to frack for natural gas we don't even need. That is why the Delaware Sierra Club supports a COMPLETE ban on fracking, fracking wastewater disposal and all related fracking activities, including water withdraws. We call on Governor Carney and the other Governors to join us in supporting a complete and comprehensive ban on fracking activities,” **said Stephanie Heron, Volunteer and Outreach Coordinator, Sierra Club, Delaware Chapter.**

“Fracking for gas in shale in the upper reaches of the Delaware River watershed will have impacts to all of our watershed communities, including pollution of air, water, and soils, as well as loss of critical ecosystems like wetlands and forests that protect us from floods and drought. We need to protect all of our watershed and communities by preventing fracking, frack wastewater and frack water withdrawals from causing irreparable harm. That is why we both support and challenge DRBC’s regulatory proposal here today,” **said Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper.**

“We know fracking cannot be done safely and that the pollution from fracking is unavoidable, no matter what regulations the DRBC may adopt to control it. The only way to protect our communities and our environment is to prevent fracking altogether, including prohibiting the dumping of toxic wastewater and the withdrawal of water for fracking. It makes no sense to ban fracking and allow the pollution it causes and the depletion of our finite water resources to fuel fracking elsewhere. We are steadfastly united here today with groups from across the Watershed for a complete fracking ban,” **said Tracy Carluccio, Deputy Director, Delaware Riverkeeper Network.**

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