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Coalition of Organizations and Residents Demand A Complete and Permanent Frack Ban throughout Delaware River Watershed at Delaware River Basin Commission Meeting

People walk out of meeting to call the Governors, the “real decisionmakers”

Washington Crossing, PA – Representatives of organizations that are part of the Delaware River Watershed frack ban coalition and members of the public attended the Delaware River Basin Commission’s (DRBC) public meeting today to show support for a complete and permanent ban on natural gas drilling, fracking and related activities throughout the Delaware River Basin.

The DRBC did not provide any opportunity for people to speak about the need for a ban at the meeting, so those who attended to show support for a full frack ban walked out of the meeting to participate in a public call-in day to the voting members of the DRBC– the Governors of PA, NY, NJ, and DE and the Army Corps of Engineers, representing President Trump’s federal administration - that was livestreamed outdoors over the internet.

The public represented by the Coalition of groups are demanding a complete and permanent ban on natural gas drilling and fracking and all related activities (including wastewater processing and discharges from and water withdrawals for drilling and fracking operations).

"The Delaware River Basin Commission is missing the mark with a ban on fracking that doesn't include a ban on the other fracking-related activities currently prohibited in the watershed. Public pressure led to the decision to ban fracking. We don't plan to stop exerting pressure on the Commissioners, the real decision-makers, until we've prevailed in getting a full fracking ban," **said Karen Feridun, Founder of Berks Gas Truth.**

“Given the wealth of science and experience documenting the devastating environmental , community and health impacts associated with every aspect of extracting gas from shale, including water withdrawals and wastewater, there is no option but for the commissioners to ban every aspect of the process,” **said Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper.**

“The whole purpose of banning fracking in the Delaware Basin is to protect clean water. You can’t protect water if you dump fracking waste into it or allow fresh, clean water to be pumped out. We strongly support the DRBC banning fracking in the entire Basin. However, the adopted DRBC resolution includes language that allows for the treatment and dumping of fracking waste, as well as taking water from the Basin for the fracking process. We would oppose any deal to get a fracking ban that allows dumping fracking wastewater in the Basin,” **said Jeff Tittel, Director of the New Jersey Sierra Club.** “We need a fracking ban: period, without any strings attached.”

"When it comes to protecting our water and our public health, there can be no half measures. But that's exactly what the DRBC staff is proposing -- distinctions without a difference. Fracking, withdrawing water for fracking, and discharging wastewater from fracking are one in the same. We need a FULL ban on all fracking related activities in the Delaware River Basin," **said Dave Pringle, NJ Campaign Director, Clean Water Action.**

“Allowing frack waste into the river basin, a source of drinking water for millions of people, would be just as damaging as fracking itself. There is no safe way to clean frack wastewater. This reckless proposal would put millions of people in Philadelphia, New Jersey, New York City and Delaware at risk of drinking contaminated water. The governors can protect this precious source of clean drinking water by supporting the strongest ban on fracking, one that includes banning fracking waste and water withdrawals for drilling companies,” **said Lena Smith, Senior Organizer, Food & Water Watch.**

“Why did the gas and oil industry work for decades to get their exemptions from major provisions of the Clean Water Act, The Safe Drinking Water Act, the Clean Air Act, the Community Right to Know law and other protective federal laws? These are exemptions no other industry has, that they got in the Bush-Cheney’s 2005 Energy Policy Act. The reason they got them is so they would not have liability for the damages they knew they would cause. Would they be giving up those exemptions to drill, or dispose of wastes in the Delaware River Basin?,” **said Barbara Arrindell, Director, Damascus Citizens for Sustainability.**

"The scientific documentation over the last seven years has become irrefutable on the negative impact of fracking and fracking waste on our waterways. Public opinion in the Delaware River watershed clearly supports an outright ban on all fracking activities in the watershed. The Delaware River Basin Commission should listen to the science and the public and move for a full ban on all fracking and fracking wastewater activities within the watershed," **said Doug O'Malley, Environment New Jersey's director.**

“Today we’ve left the DRBC meeting to make phone calls to the Governors of the Delaware River Watershed’s states and the Army Corps of Engineers to tell them to make the only reasonable, responsible vote: YES Frack Ban, NO Frack Waste, NO Water Pilfering! in the Delaware River Watershed,” **said Tracy Carluccio, Deputy Director, Delaware Riverkeeper Network.**

Since 2010, the DRBC has prohibited natural gas extraction projects in the Delaware River Basin while they study its potential impacts on water resources, a *de-facto* moratorium that does not allow permits to be issued until natural gas regulations are adopted.

A mounting call for transforming the current moratorium on natural gas drilling, fracking and related activities in the Delaware River Watershed into a permanent ban has resulted in the potential for the (DRBC) to ban or partially ban fracking and its activities but also will be written to allow the dumping of frack wastewater and the withdrawal of fresh water for fracking “where permitted”. The draft regulations are due to be issued by Nov. 30.

The five voting members – the Commissioners - of the DRBC are the Governors of the four states whose tributaries flow to the Delaware - Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey and Delaware – and the Army Corps of Engineers, representing the federal government. As an autonomous agency formed under federal law to manage the shared waters of the Basin, the Commission members are responsible for protecting the drinking water supplies of 17 million people, including New York City and Philadelphia, and the federally designated Wild and Scenic Delaware River.

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