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Over 100,000 Petitions Demanding Full Fracking Ban Delivered
*Organizations and Residents Ask Governors to vote at DRBC to ban
fracking, frack waste and water withdrawals for fracking*

Washington Crossing, PA - Representatives of organizations and members of the public submitted 104,805 signed petitions to the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) at their public business meeting today. The petitions, collected by 15 organizations representing members in all four states that are part of the Delaware River Watershed, asks the Governors of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware to vote for a complete and permanent ban on fracking and its activities. The petitions call for a ban on fracking throughout the Delaware River Basin, a ban on frack wastewater storage, processing and discharges in the Basin, and a ban on water exports from the Delaware River Watershed to fuel fracking elsewhere.

The DRBC, made up of the governors of Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey and Delaware, and the Army Corps of Engineers representing the federal government, are expected to decide in the coming months on draft natural gas regulations that include the proposed fracking ban but would also allow frack wastewater to be discharged in the basin and water to be withdrawn for fracking elsewhere. Recent developments such as the EPA's report on the high toxicity of waste produced by fracking, the Trump Administration's movement to relax frack waste disposal regulations along with other federal environmental protections such as rolling back the nation's landmark "Clean Water Rule", and recent scientific reports with dire warnings about climate change – which is worsened by methane released by fracking – provide the backdrop for the new petitions being submitted.

The Anniversary of the 8-year moratorium on fracking in the Delaware River Basin is being celebrated as the moment when the COMPLETE ban on fracking and its

wastewater and water withdrawals should be made permanent throughout the Delaware River Watershed.

“People are petitioning the Governors as their representatives on the DRBC to provide equitable and COMPLETE protection to all who rely on the Delaware for drinking water – between 15 and 17 million people - through these 104,000+ petitions. As the Trump Administration’s federal government is slashing environmental protections, we are fortunate to have an interstate agency – the DRBC – that can comprehensively regulate to ensure the Delaware River Watershed is fully protected by a complete ban that prohibits fracking, frack wastewater discharges and the export of water from the Delaware for fracking and nothing less. We are submitting these petitions to the Governors so they know the public supports their vote for a COMPLETE fracking ban in the Delaware River Watershed,” **said Tracy Carluccio, Deputy Director, Delaware Riverkeeper Network.**

"Trump's promoting fossil fuel exports, his clean water rule rollbacks, and the leading national and international scientific expert reports documenting the climate crisis is accelerating, all these past few months, create a dire emergency. The alarm bell is ringing and the Governors on the DRBC must answer the call by enacting a total ban on fracking, including wastewater and water withdrawal," **stated David Pringle, Energy Specialist, Clean Water Action.**

“As President Trump continues to imperil our waterways with nonexistent or unenforced common sense regulations, four Governors have the opportunity to take action and protect the drinking water of millions of people in the Delaware River Basin. Fracking has no business in the Basin, and imperils public safety and the health of our environment. We stand with our allies in demanding a full and complete ban on fracking and its waste in the Delaware River Basin, anything less is too dangerous.” **said Junior Romero, New Jersey Organizer, Food & Water Watch.**

“Four years after New York enacted a statewide fracking ban, the drinking water for millions of people across the four Delaware River Basin Commission member states remains threatened by harmful fracking chemicals,” **said Rob Friedman, Policy Advocate, Natural Resources Defense Council.** “We are looking to the DRBC to seize this leadership opportunity by supporting a full ban on fracking in the Delaware River Basin. Doing so would protect millions of people’s health from toxic wastewater, and preserve the region’s freshwater supplies for generations to come.”

“The clean water act is under threat, it is time for us here in the Delaware River basin to ensure that our communities and river system are safe from the persistent toxins that fracking and waste treatment release into our air and water. We know fracking can contaminate drinking water, we know that banning fracking and its related activities is the only way to guarantee that the basin is safe,” **said Wes Gillingham**

Associate Director of Catskill Mountainkeeper. He continued: “New York has banned fracking because of health impacts. We need to protect the entire basin, no one should be a test animal for gas industry toxins. Commissioners, 104,805 people across this region agree we need a full and complete fracking ban to protect this important watershed – it’s time to step up and do it.”

“The Delaware River watershed is under attack like never more. Frackers literally wait along its borders, eyeing opportunities to start gas drilling. For the last seven years, our watershed has benefited from a moratorium on drilling and outright restrictions on dumping fracking waste by the Delaware River Basin Commission,” **said Doug O’Malley, director of Environment New Jersey.** “These protections are now in peril and we need all four Governors, including Gov. Murphy, to clearly state that these DRBC fracking waste loopholes can’t stand on their watch. There is no reason to allow the threat of fracking to despoil the drinking water source for more than more than 15 million people.”

“We are here to celebrate 8 years of the DRBC protecting our water supply for 17 million people from fracking for natural gas and also their prohibition of treating and discharging fracking waste in the Delaware River. The more we learned how damaging fracking and fracking waste is to our environment and our health, the more critical it is to ban it in the basin. On this anniversary you should make the moratorium permanent. Today you should also implement a ban on treating and dumping of fracking waste and taking water out of the basin for fracking purposes,” **said Jeff Tittel, Director of the New Jersey Sierra Club.** He continued: “We need Governor Murphy to stand up and lead all four governors to approve a full fracking ban that includes no dumping of fracking waste or taking of water for fracking purposes.”

“I am calling for a ban on fracking because my future is at stake. Since I was 7 years old the threat of fracking has been hanging over my family’s head! Now at 18, I realize every decision that is made today will impact climate change, our lives and whether I will have clean water, fresh air and a healthy community,” **said Iris Fen Gillingham of Zero Hour.**

Organizations that collected signatures on the ban petition include:

Berks Gas Truth
Bucks Environmental Action
Catskill Mountainkeeper
Clean Water Action NJ
CREDO
Damascus Citizens for Sustainability
Delaware Riverkeeper Network
Delaware Sierra Club

Environment New Jersey
Food and Water Watch
Natural Resources Defense Council
NJ Sierra Club
Pennsylvania Chapter Sierra Club
Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter
Think Ocean Delaware

The Petition:

DRBC – ENACT A FULL BAN ON FRACKING

To the Delaware River Basin Commission voting members - the Governors of New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware, representing the Basin states, and the Army Corps of Engineers, representing the federal government:

We, the undersigned, call for the Delaware River Basin Commission to enact a permanent ban on natural gas drilling and fracking and all related activities (including drilling; fracking; fracking wastewater storage, processing and discharges; and water withdrawals for drilling and fracking) throughout the Delaware River Watershed.

During the eight years of the DRBC drilling moratorium, scientific studies have exposed environmental harms and documented damaging health effects, leading New York and Maryland to ban fracking. The overwhelming weight of evidence shows that shale gas simply cannot be extracted safely.

The DRBC is responsible for protecting the water resources of the Delaware River Watershed — upon which 15 million people rely for their drinking water. This water supply and the Wild and Scenic Delaware River are irreplaceable. The time to enact a permanent ban is NOW.

Background:

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 by the public 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 proposed fracking ban but the DRBC also included in draft regulations the allowance of frack wastewater discharges in the Delaware River Watershed and the withdrawal of fresh water from the basin for fracking. The draft regulations were issued Nov. 30, 2017 and the comment period closed March 31, 2018. The DRBC is now deliberating on how to proceed.

There has been a broad public demand for a complete fracking ban, including banning wastewater and water withdrawals, expressing that it is unacceptable to allow the toxic pollution from frack wastewater and the depletion of the river's water for fracking. All evidence proves how this would cause serious harm to the watershed and the water supply of up to 17 million people.

Organizations point out that recent decisions from the Trump Administration make it more urgent than ever that Governors Murphy (NJ), Cuomo (NY), Wolf (PA) and Carney (DE) act now to pass a complete ban on fracking and all of its associated activities throughout the Delaware River Basin. Even as the United Nation's climate experts gave dire warnings about how we need to urgently act to move away from fossil fuel extraction and burning, including fracked gas, to avoid catastrophic climate change, (see the report here: <https://bit.ly/2lOH2bK>), and the U.S. National Climate Assessment Report warns the impacts of climate change are already being felt in communities across the country and will worsen as more frequent and intense extreme weather and climate-related events occur, (see report here: (<https://nca2018.globalchange.gov/>), President Trump denies that humans cause climate change. Despite releasing an EPA report that showed the toxic dangers of fracking wastewater to our waterways, (see report here: <https://bit.ly/2yywFoF>), the Trump Administration's EPA may undo the prohibition on the acceptance of frack wastewater at the nation's municipal sewage facilities and ease current water quality protections, paving the way for frack wastewater to be dumped in surface water, including the Delaware River Watershed (see details here: <https://www.epa.gov/eg/study-oil-and-gas-extraction-wastewater-management>).

As an autonomous agency formed under federal law to manage the shared waters of the Basin, the DRBC members are responsible for equitably protecting the drinking water supplies of 15 to 17 million people in all four states, including the metropolitan areas of New York City and Philadelphia, and the federally designated Wild and Scenic Delaware River.

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