



March 12, 2012

Dear SRBC Commissioners,

We write to urge you NOT to approve the water withdrawals before you on March 15 at your public meeting. These water withdrawals will remove more fresh water from the Susquehanna River Watershed. The consumptive nature of these withdrawals make the impacts all the greater since the water will be removed from the hydraulic cycle completely, never to be returned as part of nature's fresh water cycle that supplies the precious water all life on earth requires.

The SRBC has tremendous power and yet you do not exercise it to protect the water resources and watershed of the Susquehanna River. We here in the Delaware River Watershed see the frenzied development of natural gas in our neighboring watersheds as destructive and causing irreparable harm; this degradation affects all of us as Pennsylvanians and produces the wastewater and other hazardous waste products (cuttings, sludges, etc.) and infrastructure that causes pollution and degradation everywhere it goes, including here in the Delaware River Watershed.

The inevitable pollution that results from the removal of water from the Basin and the use of the water in gas and oil drilling, hydraulic fracturing, and other gas development activities, is unacceptable and is causing permanent degradation of the Susquehanna's ground and surface waters. Communities in Pennsylvania where you are allowing this to happen by your allocation of water for these processes are experiencing thousands of violations of environmental permits by gas and oil drillers each year, which is inexcusable, and yet you allow this to continue by your narrow "blinders-on" approach to your mission. It is a fact that drilling and hydraulic fracturing unavoidably pollute aquifers due to the pathways of pollution created by these practices, yet the SRBC does not address these consequences of your approvals. You are enabling this destructive development and these violations by not doing your job as an agency to manage and protect water in your basin.

We petition you for a moratorium on water withdrawals and any other activities for which you issue permits that enable natural gas development in the Susquehanna River Watershed. We urge you to conduct the needed comprehensive environmental studies, human health impact studies, and cumulative impact analyses of the effects of natural gas development on the Susquehanna River Basin with a goal of eliminating pollution and degradation from gas drilling and a plan to protect and restore water quality, healthy habitats, and healthy communities to the entire Susquehanna River Watershed. The continually emerging human and animal health impacts that are going unresolved must be addressed and cannot be if gas development is ongoing, compounding these harms for communities and the environment.

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We also advocate for an open and highly participatory public process in the consideration of these permits. Taking action at a meeting where there is no public hearing deprives the public of the ability to effectively participate in the decisions you will be making at the meeting. This diminishment of the public's role in the actions taken by the SRBC reflects poorly on you as Commissioners representing the elected officials who are the voting members of the SRBC. These elected officials, the Governors and the President of the United States, should be open to a democratic process that allows for free and active public participation. The truncation of the public's input is unfair and unacceptable. We petition you to restore and expand the public participation process for these crucial decisions regarding the waters of the Susquehanna.

We submit this letter on behalf of the 10,000 members of Delaware Riverkeeper Network.

Sincerely,

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The Delaware Riverkeeper

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Deputy Director