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Environmentalists on Hand for Deepening Announcement

Environmental Organizations attended Thursdays DRPA meeting to hear official announcement of the deal negotiated between Pennsylvania and New Jersey that will allow Pennsylvania's PRPA to pursue the Delaware River deepening project unilaterally.

According to Maya K. van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper, "Until now Governor Corzine, and previously Senator Corzine, has expressed opposition to the Delaware River deepening project, recognizing its environmental and economic failings. What has changed from then until now she asks? Politics. This is a purely political deal cut between political allies, regardless of the ramifications for our region"

According to a report issued by the Delaware Riverkeeper Network and National Wildlife Federation in March 2007 the Delaware River deepening:

- Poses a variety of toxic pollution threats including the introduction or reintroduction of toxins into to drinking water aquifers, the river, fish, birds and wildlife.
- Poses threats to an array of ecologically and economically important species such as horseshoe crabs, oysters, shortnose sturgeon, sportfish, Red Knot rufa, peregrine falcon and bald eagle.
- There are growing concerns about the impacts a deepened Delaware river will have on the harms threatened by sea level rise including erosion, flooding and habitat loss.
- Economically the project has a negative benefit-cost ratio meaning money is lost on every dollar invested.

The Delaware River serves many purposes: it provides an entrance way to major east coast ports, it provides drinking water to over 15 million people, it supports recreation and ecotourism; and it provides food, water and habitat to fish, wildlife and plants throughout the region.

According to Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper, "the Delaware River Deepening project brings with it environmental and community threats and harms that we simply cannot accept. The Delaware River deepening has become a political prize that brings with it no real winnings and in fact would make our river and region big losers. Our ports may want help to grow and to continue their prosperous move forward – they cannot expect to do that on the backs of the rest of the community. We need to be investing our limited resources in port projects that make sense and will truly make a difference – not in projects that fail to enhance the port while at the same time harm the rest of our River communities."

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