



For Immediate Release
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New Jersey Environmental, Conservation and Energy Organizations Appeal to Governor to Sign the Frack Ban Bill

Trenton, NJ – Twenty five organizations¹ representing a broad alliance of groups submitted a letter to Governor Chris Christie today asking him to sign the Ban Bill (S-2576, A3313), a bill passed by both the New Jersey Senate and Assembly prohibiting the use of hydraulic fracturing for the purpose of natural gas exploration or production in the State.

The New Jersey Legislature adopted the Bill by a sweeping majority on June 29, 2011. The Bill is ready to be signed into Law by the Governor.

Natural gas drilling is proceeding at breakneck speed in Pennsylvania in the Marcellus Shale, a deep geologic formation that underlies much of Pennsylvania and a portion of New York State, including areas located within the Delaware River Basin. Utica Shale, now also being explored by energy companies, is located beneath the Marcellus and intrudes into northwestern New Jersey. While there is no drilling now, there could be development of the Utica in the future.

Drillers must use hydraulic fracturing, or “fracking”, to force the gas out of the tight shale formations. Water and air pollution from drilling and fracking operations, water depletion due to the million of gallons of water required to frack a well, and the degradation of streams, landscapes and habitat due to the large scale of natural gas development are causing extensive problems where gas drilling is occurring. In Pennsylvania, PADEP’s oil and gas

¹ This press announcement is being re-released because one organization, New Jersey Environmental Federation (NJEF), was inadvertently left off the list of organizations that signed the letter to the Governor, despite being one of the first groups to endorse the letter. The letter is being resubmitted to Governor Christie in its corrected form so that the Governor knows that NJEF signed the letter.

program reported more than 11 violations of environmental permits per day by drillers so far in 2011, up from about 6 per day in 2010.

“The New Jersey Legislature is standing up for clean water pro-actively by banning fracking in the State before it starts, said Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper. “Now it is up to Governor Christie to make this smart preventive measure into law,” added van Rossum.

“The more New Jersey residents know about fracking, the more they’re against it,” said Doug O’Malley, field director for Environment New Jersey. “The Governor can send a clear message that he supports the state’s drinking water by signing this legislation as is. Fracking is a dangerous business, and the Governor shouldn’t play a wait-and-see game to see if gas drillers develop a taste for the Garden State.”

"This letter is another sign of the growing support for a ban on fracking, a practice that poses unacceptable risk to public health, our drinking water and the environment," said Jim Walsh, NJ Director of Food & Water Watch. "Governor Christie can show true national leadership by being the first Governor in the US to sign a bill banning fracking," added Walsh.

“New Jersey can achieve economical protection of public health and the environment from the impacts of gas drilling by banning fracking here if Governor Christie takes the bold step to sign this Bill. Prevention of pollution is the most cost-effective action available to government, all the more so when irreplaceable resources can be lost”, said Tracy Carluccio, Deputy Director, Delaware Riverkeeper Network.

A copy of the letter follows:

August 1, 2011

Governor Chris Christie
PO Box 001
Trenton, NJ 08625

Re: The Ban Bill: S2576

Dear Governor Christie,

We, the undersigned organizations, urge you to sign the New Jersey Ban Bill into law.

The New Jersey Legislature has overwhelmingly approved the New Jersey Ban Bill (S2576, A3313) prohibiting the use of hydraulic fracturing for the purpose of natural gas exploration or production in the State. This is a historic action on the part of the Legislature aimed at protecting New Jersey’s water resources and communities.

It is also remarkable because of the bipartisan support the measure received and the huge margin of favor. In the New Jersey Senate the vote was: Yes, 33; No, 1; Not Voting, 6. In the New Jersey Assembly the vote was: Yes, 58; No, 11; Not Voting, 2, Abstains, 8. This vote undoubtedly reflects the enormous public and constituent support for a ban on hydraulic fracturing in New Jersey.

Everywhere gas drilling is occurring, problems follow. In Pennsylvania, PADEP records show about 11 violations of environmental permits by gas and oil company operators every day.² In 2010, there were about 6 per day. As gas drilling quickly expands, violations proliferate. And some of the biggest, most profitable companies have the most violations. Chesapeake Energy (132), Chief Oil and Gas (174), Cabot (114), Anadarko (75), Talisman Energy (153), East Resources (74), and Exxon Mobile/XTO (66) top the list as the worst.

Why are there problems? Because hydraulic fracturing, or “fracking”, isn’t safe. Gas drilling regulations aren’t adequate and the technology itself isn’t advanced enough to prevent substantial damage to the environment. Even with the best available technology, methane and chemicals are escaping into ground and surface water.³ Harmful human health and environmental impacts are the result.

Due to years of lobbying by the industry, the oil and gas industry is exempt from protections in the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, the Superfund law, the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, and the Safe Drinking Water Act. In addition, they are not covered by public right-to-know provisions under the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act. These exemptions make it impossible to sufficiently address gas drilling at the State level; without federal regulatory reform fracking will never be safe.

Governor Christie, we have a rare moment in time when New Jersey can take real action to protect its water resources – action that will prevent pollution for present and future generations. Preventing pollution is the best investment that can be made in the State’s future.⁴

Please consider the positive impact you will be making as you stand up for clean water in New Jersey in response to the deep concern expressed to the State’s lawmakers by the residents of New Jersey. Please sign the Ban Bill today.

Sincerely,

American Littoral Society, Tim Dillingham, Executive Director
Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions, Sandy Batty,
Executive Director
Clean Ocean Action, Cindy Zipf, Executive Director
Cohansey Area River Preservation, Cynthia Zirkle, President
Conserve Wildlife Foundation of New Jersey, Margaret O’Gorman
Delaware Riverkeeper Network, Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper, and Tracy
Carluccio, Deputy Director
Edison Wetlands Association, Dana Patterson, Toxics Coordinator
Environment New Jersey, Dena Mottola Jaborska, Executive Director
Food and Water Watch, Jim Walsh, New Jersey Director
Grandmothers, Mothers and More for Energy Safety, Paula Gotsch, Co-Founder
GreenFaith, Rev. Fletcher Harper, Executive Director

² <http://www.dep.state.pa.us/dep/deputate/minres/oilgas/OGInspectionsViolations/OGInspviol.htm>

³ http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/us/DRILLING_DOWN_SERIES.html;
<http://www.nicholas.duke.edu/cgc/HydraulicFracturingWhitepaper2011.pdf>;
<http://www.delawariverkeeper.org/resources/Reports/Rubin%20report%20finalfinalTOC4.9%202011%20.pdf>.

⁴ <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/hwtr/p2/whatisp2.html>

New Jersey Audubon Society, Eric Stiles, Chief Operating Officer
New Jersey Conservation Foundation, Alison Mitchell, Policy Director
New Jersey Environmental Federation, Amy Goldsmith, State Director
New Jersey Environmental Lobby, Michael L. Pisauro, Jr., Legislative Affairs
New Jersey Highlands Coalition, Julia Somers, Executive Director
New Jersey Sierra Club, Jeff Tittel, Director
North Jersey Public Policy Network, Rhoda Schermer, Chairperson
NY/NJ Baykeeper, Debbie Mans, Baykeeper and Executive Director
Pascack Sustainability Group, Rosemary Dreger Carey, Founder and Chair
Pinelands Preservation Alliance, Jaclyn Rhoads, Director of Conservation Policy
Raritan RIVERKEEPER, Bill Shultz, Raritan Riverkeeper
South Branch Watershed Association, William S. Kibler, Executive Director
South Jersey Land and Water Trust, Suzanne McCarthy, President
Tidewaters Gateway Partnership, inc., Richard H. McNutt, President

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