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Vote on Gas Drilling and Fracking
Postponed by Delaware River Basin Commission
to November 21, 2011
Public Voice Being Heard

West Trenton, NJ – The Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) announced today that it is postponing the public meeting scheduled for October 21 where a decision on natural gas drilling and fracking in the Delaware River Watershed is anticipated. The DRBC stated in a press announcement (http://www.state.nj.us/drbc/newsrel_naturalgas100711.htm) that natural gas development regulations will be considered by the agency at a public meeting set for 10:00 am to 12:00 pm, November 21 at the Trenton War Memorial. The approval of gas drilling regulations will mean the lifting of the current drilling moratorium in the Delaware River Watershed.

The voting members of the DRBC - Governor Andrew Cuomo (NY), Governor Chris Christie (NJ), Governor Jack Markell (DE), and Governor Tom Corbett (PA), as the Governors of the four states that drain to the Delaware River and Colonel Christopher Larsen of the US Army Corps of Engineers, the federal representative - have been receiving a barrage of letters and phone calls over the past month since the October 21 meeting was set, including a virtual march on the DRBC through social media. President Barack Obama as the elected federal official has also been receiving the communications. Thousands are expected to attend the DRBC Meeting to protest the commencement of gas drilling, traveling from throughout the 13,000 square mile basin, including buses from as far as 5 hours away. Public debate has raged over the past 3 years in the Watershed because the DRBC has not done comprehensive environmental analyses

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to assess the immediate and cumulative impacts of natural gas development on the water resources of the Delaware River Basin, the sole water supply for over 15 million people, including New York City, Philadelphia and large populations in all four watershed states.

“People are speaking clearly and with one voice saying “Don’t Drill the Delaware” and perhaps the voting members of the DRBC have paused because of this strong outpouring. It is crucial that the members who will cast this vote are painfully aware that the public cares profoundly about the ramifications of gas development on drinking water, the Basin’s communities and the economic viability and health of the Watershed’s resources. Perhaps this postponement will result in deep consideration by these members and they’ll realize gas drilling should not commence”, said Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper.

“With this delay we now have more time to fight and protect the Delaware River Basin. We have an opportunity now to continue to pressure our elected official to ban fracking in New Jersey and keep the moratorium in place. We can determine whether we can protect the Delaware River Basin and have clean drinking water for future generations by coming out to this meeting and showing the DRBC our opposition. Together we can not only protect the Delaware River Basin, but we can have a much cleaner, greener future. We must stop these rules and ban fracking”, said Jeff Tittel, Director of the New Jersey Sierra Club.

“As public backlash against fracking gains speed, the Delaware River Basin Commission’s decision to delay their vote on whether to open the Delaware River Basin to the process clearly indicates that the movement to ban fracking is swaying policymakers. We suspect that the commission’s motive for moving its vote to a holiday week may actually be an attempt to preclude the public from attending this historic meeting. Not only is the timing of the new vote terrible, but we feel strongly that the commission should not be voting to move forward with fracking. Instead, it should protect the drinking water of 15 million Americans by banning this dangerous practice in this critical watershed” said Jim Walsh, Eastern Region Director for Food & Water Watch, a national consumer advocacy organization who is calling for a national ban on fracking.

The DRBC announced that it intends “to publish the modified draft regulations on the DRBC web site (www.drbc.net) two weeks in advance of the expected vote by the commissioners. This web posting, planned for November 7, will be for informational purposes only since comments will not be accepted”.

For more information on gas drilling go to www.delawariverkeeper.org

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