



## **For Immediate Release**

October 25, 2010

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## **Gas Driller Withdraws in Face of Effective Environmental Advocacy and Municipal Defense**

**Nockamixon Township, Bucks County, PA** – Arbor Operating LLC (Arbor), the company that was planning to drill for natural gas in Nockamixon Township, Bucks County, has pulled out. The company notified Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP) by letter dated October 14, 2010 of their “intent to immediately withdraw” Arbor’s Cabot #2 gas well drilling permit. Arbor’s only well application, this effectively removes gas drilling as an immediate threat in Bucks County.

Delaware Riverkeeper Network joined with Nockamixon Township to oppose the issuance of the PADEP drilling permit to Arbor Operating, LLC for the Arbor well site on May 18, 2010.

Environmental resource and community concerns were the basis of the Appeal to the PA Environmental Hearing Board. These concerns included inadequate

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consideration of adverse impacts to: Rapp Creek, designated an Exceptional Value (EV) stream by Pennsylvania, and anti-degradation requirements for the watershed; groundwater quality and quantity and stream flow; the Township's comprehensive planning, zoning, and resource protection ordinances; the sustainability of water supplies; the Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic River and the Special Protection Waters of the River; and cumulative watershed impacts.

“We fought alongside Nockamixon Township to force the gas company to protect the environment and obey local zoning regulations, which they are required to do but resisted”, said Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper. “When faced with well-organized and informed opposition, they retreated”, said van Rossum.

“This is encouraging for others who are fighting to protect their communities from the harms of gas development but are daunted by big business. The moral of the story is ‘Make decisions about defending the environment and your community based on the law and what’s right, not on who has the bigger guns”, said Tracy Carluccio, Delaware Riverkeeper Network Deputy Director, “Sometimes an opponent may not be all they seem to be”.

DRN and Nockamixon Twp are also challenging the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) decision to allow the Arbor well to be drilled without DRBC review or approval as a “grandfathered” so-called “exploratory” well along with about a dozen other gas wells in the Delaware River Watershed, mostly in Wayne County. That meant that the Arbor well had the green light to be drilled since all other wells are now subject to a moratorium while the DRBC develops natural gas regulations for the Basin.

The DRN/Township request was made following an April 2010 letter from DRBC stating that Arbor need not obtain approval from the Commission for its proposed project. Arbor opposed this hearing request. The DRBC granted the Request for Hearing and those legal proceedings are underway with a Hearing set for the week of Dec. 13. Arbor is an “Interested Party” in these proceedings and their status in that regard is not yet settled.

About 300 leases are still in effect in Bucks County but the future of whether speculators will want to explore for natural gas in the region in the future is very much up in the air. Nockamixon Township is underlain by Lockatong Shale, a different type of shale than the much-sought after Marcellus Shale which has attracted companies worldwide to Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Ohio. The Marcellus shale is already producing gas and projections forecast the Marcellus as a national leader in abundance. The Lockatong, on the other hand, is as yet an “unknown”. The demise of the Arbor well could be of great significance in the story of natural gas development here.

“Arbor’s withdrawal is significant in the bigger picture of how gas drilling may move ahead in the Delaware River Watershed. While we fight for a cumulative impact study and strict DRBC regulations that will prevent pollution and degradation from gas extraction and development, it is great to know that this well cannot be drilled before those key provisions are accomplished. This saves this portion of the Watershed from the dangers of runaway gas development at this vulnerable juncture”, said van Rossum.

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