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**Groups Protest Delaware River Basin Commission
Shutting out Public from Gas Drilling Decisions**

West Trenton, NJ – Organizations from throughout the Delaware River Watershed cried “foul” today because the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) issued what it termed as “modified” natural gas development regulations on November 8, 2011 without any opportunity for public comment, input, or testimony concerning the changes to the draft regulations (www.drbc.net). DRBC released a draft of its proposed rules in December 2010 with a public comment period that closed April 15, 2011. A record number of comments were received by the agency on the draft - 69,800 comments - breaking all records for public involvement. Since then they have been reviewing the comments and announced last month that they would be voting on the draft regulations 10:00am -12:00pm on November 21, 2011 at a special meeting at the War Memorial in Trenton, NJ and that there would be no public hearing and no opportunity for public input into the new version of the regulations. A vote to approve gas regulations would lift the current moratorium on gas drilling in the Delaware River Basin.

“DRBC is slamming the door in the public’s face and it’s simply unacceptable. It’s a gross violation of the public trust not to hear what people have to say about these changed regulations; the deep and unprecedented interest that people have shown to gas drilling is undeniable and our Watershed’s health and future is at stake”, said Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper.

"The Upper Delaware River is a nationally recognized ecological treasure and because of its pristine nature is able to provide clean drinking water for millions of people. Now we have the DRBC proposing how to trash it!" said Wes Gillingham Program Director for Catskill Mountainkeeper. "They are shutting out the people who's quality of health depends on this river, through a politicized process that is driven the oil and gas industry. It is outrageous."

"They are using this process to weaken the regulations and make them even worse. What they are doing is unconscionable. This is an abuse of power that blocks the right of the public to have a say in a matter that will directly affect their lives," said Jeff Tittel, Director, New Jersey Sierra Club.

"The New York portion of the Delaware River Basin provides fifty percent of the pristine, unfiltered water that nine million New Yorkers rely on daily," said Kate Hudson, Riverkeeper Watershed Program Director. "The DRBC should not vote on fracking regulations that threaten this irreplaceable water supply in the absence of the environmental review it was required to conduct and without allowing citizens to weigh in on its last minute revisions to those regulations. By cutting corners and rushing the process, the Commission is ignoring its legal obligations to the public and to the water resources of the Basin it was formed to protect", concluded Hudson.

"The public is getting stiffed by this decision. The public deserves to comment on these new proposed fracking rules – not to be iced out," said Doug O'Malley, Field Director for Environment New Jersey. "This is the biggest decision to face the Delaware since the Tocks Island Dam, and the DRBC should allow public comment."

"Apparently DRBC cares more about Big Oil than the public trust. They're borrowing gags and blind folds from the fossil fuel industry to keep us in the dark and from speaking about changes to the rules just as Exxon doesn't want us to know about, or act against, the secret toxic formula it wants to literally pump into our water. Will Governor Christie let them get away with it?" Campaign Director, NJ Environmental Federation.

"The Commission (DRBC) continues to play politics with writing regulations for allowing hydro-fracking in the Delaware River Basin. This river basin cannot be subjected to this abuse. We demand that the commission employ the relevant science that exists about fracking. All of the available geological scientific reporting confirms that fracking will release naturally existing toxic and radioactive materials that will migrate from the deep formations through natural and induced fractures which create pathways for contamination. This happens every single time a well is fracked. The DRBC is a multi-state and federal commission that is required to comply with NEPA and should not

have to be sued to do so. Regulations will not stop the industrialization of the watershed and contamination of its resources,” said Joe Levine, NYH2O of New York.

“The Delaware River is as clean as it is today in part because of the Basin Commission's hard work over many decades - and in part because of citizen involvement demanding that the Basin and the River flow into the future as a clean and healthy sustainer of life. Why would the Basin Commission endanger the River, the public today, and the future by approving gas drilling regulations they admit should be informed by a study of cumulative impacts when this study has not been done and the public is being removed from the process?” said Barbara Arrindell, Director of Damascus Citizens for Sustainability, PA.

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 two months since the November 21 meeting was set, including a virtual march on the DRBC through social media and call-in days to voting members' offices. President Barack Obama as the elected federal official has also been receiving the communications. Several hundred people are expected to attend the DRBC Meeting to protest DRBC's consideration of 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 due to the environmental impacts of gas drilling where it is occurring and continuing revelations that drilling and fracking is not safe and is causing hundreds of pollution incidents. The DRBC has not done comprehensive environmental analyses to assess the immediate and cumulative impacts of natural gas development on the water resources of the Delaware River Basin, water supply for over 15 million people, including New York City, Philadelphia and large populations in all four watershed states, jeopardizing this sole source of water.

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