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**If Fracking is Too Dangerous, So Is Importing Fracking's Toxic Waste
Statement from the Delaware River Frack Ban Coalition
*Last Call for Public Comments!***

West Trenton, NJ – Three days after the first anniversary of the ban on fracking in the Delaware River Basin, the same Commission that enacted the ban will conclude a public comment period on proposed regulations that would allow fracking waste to be imported into the watershed and basin water to be exported for fracking operations elsewhere. If fracking is too dangerous for the watershed, so is importing fracking wastewater. Further, if fracking is too dangerous for communities in the watershed, it is too dangerous everywhere, so we can't be feeding fracking with our precious water.

Each Wednesday since December, the Delaware River Frack Ban Coalition has shared information and an in-depth look at a different aspect of the draft rules. "Watershed Wednesdays" [<https://sites.google.com/view/delawareriverfrackban/>] has helped hundreds of commenters to construct their written comments and submit them to the DRBC during the comment period that ends on February 28th at 5 p.m. Coalition webinars were held for those who wanted to learn more. DRBC held public hearings in December and on February 3, at which the Coalition encouraged people to testify. The hearings were overwhelmed with the public calling for a full ban.

As the one year Anniversary of the Delaware River Watershed Frack Ban approaches this week, so does the last opportunity for people to speak up for a full frack ban. The DRBC Commissioners - the Governors of NY, NJ, PA, and DE, and the Army Corps of Engineers representing President Biden – will consider what has been submitted and eventually vote

at a future meeting. They will decide whether to not only ban fracking wastewater discharges, a protection critically needed, but to finish the task at hand by adding to the rules a categorical ban on both fracking wastewater imports and water exports for fracking. The Coalition's "Last Call to Save the Watershed" will end February 28 at 5pm when the DRBC's on-line portal <https://dockets.drbc.commentinput.com/?id=x2K8A> will close.

The Delaware River Frack Ban Organizing Committee is: Berks Gas Truth, Catskill Mountainkeeper, Clean Water Action, Damascus Citizens for Sustainability, Delaware Riverkeeper Network, Environment New Jersey, Food & Water Watch, Natural Resources Defense Council, Sierra Club, League of Women Voters of Delaware.

Background information:

On February 25, 2021, DRBC approved a rule that permanently banned all fracking throughout the Delaware River Watershed, an epic win for which advocates had worked for more than a decade. On October 28, 2021, DRBC published draft natural gas regulations that proposed to PROHIBIT the DISCHARGE of wastewater produced by fracking to water or land but ALLOW the IMPORT of wastewater produced by fracking and ALLOW the EXPORT of water for use in fracking outside of the basin. The comment period on these draft rules will end next week, Feb. 28 at 5pm.

The Coalition immediately launched a campaign last fall aimed at exposing the loopholes in the draft fracking regulations. Allowing the import of fracking wastewater would allow polluting projects that don't require a water or land discharge to proliferate, greenlighting fracking wastewater processing facilities and uses that would release dangerous pollution. The Coalition explained that under the draft regulations, the same toxic and radioactive wastewater pollution that the DRBC considered too dangerous to discharge would be released to the watershed through other pathways, as well as setting up possibilities for illegal dumping, spills, and accidents involving the toxic, radioactive, unregulated waste.

The draft rules are riddled with holes. Processing plants that don't strictly "discharge to water or land" would emit pollution to the air that would then fall on water, land, and

ecosystems, also fouling the air we breathe. Storage/transfer complexes and so-called “beneficial uses” (i.e. reused as cooling water by utilities and manufacturing) would release this toxic and radioactive pollution through leaks, spills, runoff, and emissions. Water exported for fracking would deplete and degrade our precious water and harm waterways, ecosystems, fish and wildlife and would induce more fracking in other watersheds, causing devastating pollution, harming human health and habitats, and releasing more methane - the most powerful of greenhouse gasses - worsening the climate crisis.

The Coalition worked quickly to try to get the public comment process expanded and made more equitable so more people could fairly participate. Through a united plea for a longer comment period, it was extended from January 28 to February 28. Spanish translations of the proposed rule and supporting materials, including at the February 3 hearing, were added; a way to submit comments through the postal service was added to increase access for those without a computer or broadband access. This wasn't all the Coalition advocated for, but it did increase opportunities for diverse public participation.

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