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## **Frack Ban? Delaware River Basin Commission Deliberates**

***Resolution on fracking in the Delaware River Watershed  
rejected by environmental advocates as “one step forward, two steps back”***

**Newtown, PA** - The Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) published a draft resolution Monday that could ban gas drilling and fracking but could allow the storage, treatment, and discharge of frack wastewater and the withdrawal of water from the watershed for fracking elsewhere. The DRBC set their public meeting today to adopt the resolution “...which would direct the executive director to prepare and publish for public comment by Nov. 30, 2017 a revised set of draft regulations to address natural gas development activities within the Delaware River Basin”.

Last week the Associated Press announced that the DRBC was commencing a process to ban fracking and drilling. While the DRBC’s proposed resolution offers a fracking ban provision, it takes a huge step backwards by including consideration of the removal of the prohibition on frack wastewater discharges and water withdrawals for gas development which is included in the current fracking moratorium.

The Coalition of organizations that have been demanding a complete ban define fracking as a process that includes all aspects of gas development and consider any attempt to segregate the phases of gas development to be disingenuous and technically erroneous. Fracking and the harms it brings include every phase from the industrial preparation of the land, to drilling and fracking, the withdrawal and degradation of water and its discharge and disposal – one stage cannot be severed from another. To allow waste dumping and water withdrawals would open the door for the degradation and depletion of the water resources of the Basin. The Coalition is opposed to the proposed resolution and is calling for a new resolution that comprehensively and permanently bans all aspects of gas development throughout the entire Delaware River Watershed.

"The proposed resolution is much weaker than the moratorium currently in place that prohibits water extraction, dumping of fracking waste, and natural gas storage. From the beginning, anti-fracking advocates used the term fracking to refer to the entire process, not just drilling, and we don't plan to settle for any action by the DRBC that doesn't ban all of it," **said Karen Feridun, Founder, Berks Gas Truth.**

"DRBC needs to take strong action to protect the Delaware from all aspects of fracking but the proposed resolution appears to do just the opposite. Making the temporary moratorium on fracking a permanent ban in exchange for enabling many other aspects of fracking\_like inter-basin transfers of water and wastewater disposal, storage, treatment and disposal within the basin is unacceptable," **said David Pringle, NJ Campaign Director, Clean Water Action.**

"The proposed DRBC resolution attempts to "cut the baby in half", which we know ends badly. It is of utmost importance that fracking, in all its aspects, be permanently banned throughout the Delaware River Watershed if the river is to successfully continue to provide clean drinking water to 17 million people. Fracking and the toxic waste it produces and the vast quantities of water it consumes must be banned in its entirety," **said Tracy Carluccio, Deputy Director, Delaware Riverkeeper Network.**

"With this resolution, the DRBC is poised to roll back the high level of protection from drilling and fracking for shale our watershed now enjoys. While posturing the possibility of a ban on fracking in some parts of our watershed, the resolution opens the door wide to many of the most devastating impacts that drilling and fracking for shale brings to waterways and communities. As a result, we must oppose it," **said Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper.**

"No regulations can fully protect our communities and the environment from the dangers of fracking and its associated activities. NRDC welcomes the opportunity to demonstrate that a ban on fracking in the Delaware River Basin must also include a ban on all aspects of this dangerous process, including the storage, treatment and disposal of wastewater," **said Rob Friedman, Policy Advocate, Natural Resources Defense Council.**

"This resolution is one step forward with a giant step backwards. We support a ban on fracking; however, this resolution includes language that allows for the treatment and dumping of fracking waste in the Basin. The whole purpose of a fracking ban is to protect our water from the toxic chemicals of fracking. We will oppose the resolution unless they remove the dangerous language to allow fracking waste dumping and treatment. We're telling the DRBC to ban fracking and don't dump on the Delaware!" **said Jeff Tittel, Director of the New Jersey Sierra Club.**

“Today's action by the commissioners opening up the process to permanently ban fracking in the basin could be a positive step forward. Their press release references the possibly of water withdrawals and waste disposal ‘where permitted’. Catskill Mountainkeeper believes a ban on fracking should include all of the impacts of fracking period,” **said Wes Gillingham, Associate Director, Catskill Mountainkeeper.**

“The total health of the Delaware River Basin is imperiled by allowing DRB drilling, waste disposal or storage and the removal of clean water from the basin to facilitate drilling elsewhere is also not acceptable! We are killing ourselves with climate change causing carbon pollution. The DRB has to move forward setting an example for preserving resources and a healthy future,” **said Barbara Arrindell, Director of Damascus Citizens for Sustainability.**

“Thousands of residents of the Delaware River Watershed have spent years working towards a full ban on fracking and related activities such as fracking waste treatment. Pressure on DRBC members won't stop until we reach that goal. For the millions of people who rely on the river for safe drinking water, the watershed is too important to be starting the conversation anywhere other than a full ban on these dangerous activities,” **said Sam Bernhardt, Senior Pennsylvania Organizer, Food and Water Watch.**

Since 2010, the DRBC has prohibited natural gas extraction anywhere in the Delaware River Basin while they study its potential impacts on water resources, a *de-facto* moratorium that does not allow permits to be issued until natural gas regulations are adopted. The Coalition of organizations and members of the public have long been actively demanding a permanent ban on all gas drilling and fracking within the entire Delaware River Watershed, demonstrating at all DRBC public meetings this year, and submitting to the DRBC Commissioners last month over 65,000 petitions calling for a permanent fracking ban.

The DRBC's voting members are the Governors of Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey and Delaware and the Army Corps of Engineers representing President Trump. The DRBC is responsible for managing the water resources of the Delaware River Watershed, which includes portions of each of the Basin states and supplies drinking water to up to 17 million people every day, including New York City and Philadelphia. The Delaware River is designated by Congress as a Wild and Scenic River. The nontidal Delaware River (from the headwaters in New York State all the way downstream to south of Trenton, NJ) is the longest stretch of anti-degradation waters in the nation, requiring that the river's exceptional water quality not be degraded under the DRBC's Special Protection Waters regulations.

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