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River Demonstrators Demand Complete Fracking Ban

Canoeists unfurl banner on Delaware River against frack waste

Bordentown, NJ – Canoeists took to the water today as they unfurled a banner proclaiming “Defend the Delaware; Ban Fracking and Frack Waste” from the boat ramp at Bordentown, New Jersey. At a press conference prior to the canoe launch, organizations working for a complete ban throughout the Delaware River Watershed on fracking, the processing and discharge of wastewater produced by fracking and water withdrawals for fracking, called on Governor Phil Murphy to stand with them.

The canoeists paddled from Bordentown Beach upstream on the Delaware and Crosswicks Creek, highlighting the region that is being targeted currently by a proposal by Elcon across the river in Bucks County to build a hazardous waste facility that could take frack waste.

The banner will travel to the Upper Delaware River for display in Barryville New York on Sunday, August 26 to show a united front against fracking by people on both the Pennsylvania and New York shores of the river.

The groups are fighting for a total ban in the face of draft regulations issued by the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) last November, followed by a public comment period through March 31, 2018 that attracted more than 40,000 comments. The DRBC Commissioners (the Governors of New Jersey, Pennsylvania, New York, and Delaware and the Army Corps of Engineers) are expected to vote this year on whether to ban fracking and all its activities or to allow frack wastewater to be imported and discharged here, as well as allowing water to be exported for fracking elsewhere.

“You can't ban fracking without banning fracking waste in the Delaware. Not only will fracking pollute the waterways and threaten water supply for 17 million people, but the dumping of frack waste is just as dangerous. We need a complete ban to keep all fracking activities out of our Valley, including dangerous frack waste that could end up in facilities such as Elcon on the Delaware,” **said Jeff Tittel, Director of the New Jersey Sierra Club.** “We have fought for ten years to ban fracking and the dumping of

frack waste in the Basin and now we're calling on the DRBC to implement the entire ban!"

"Governor Murphy stated he opposes fracking in the Delaware River Basin to protect our water supplies and environment. It is essential that frack waste also be banned if we want clean drinking water because one third of New Jersey gets its water from the Delaware. We're asking the Governor to lead the way as the newly elected chairman of the DRBC towards a complete ban on fracking, frack waste and water for fracking. We're asking Governor Murphy to defend the Delaware from this industrial pollution that would ruin our Watershed," **said Tracy Carluccio, Deputy Director, Delaware Riverkeeper Network.**

"The DRBC's proposed fracking ban is nothing short of irresponsible. If the DRBC were truly living up to their mandate of protecting the Delaware River Basin, they would have proposed a FULL ban on fracking! We are counting on Governor Murphy to see that allowing fracking wastewater disposal and treatment in the basin will irreparably harm the drinking water of 15 million people. We are counting on him to see that a fracking ban that allows water to be withdrawn from the Delaware and used for fracking elsewhere is ethically questionable. We are counting on him to vote NO on the DRBC's proposed halfway ban, and call for a FULL, 100% ban on fracking in the Delaware River Basin," **said Alyssa Bradley, Energy Organizer, Clean Water Action.**

"The Delaware River watershed deserves a complete ban on fracking and fracking waste. We urge Governor Murphy to publicly support a complete fracking and fracking waste ban to ensure that the proposed DRBC rules are strengthened to fully protect our drinking water," **said Doug O'Malley, Director of Environment New Jersey.**

Background:

Since 2010 the DRBC has prohibited natural gas extraction projects 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.

A mounting call by the public for transforming the current moratorium on natural gas drilling, fracking and related activities in the Delaware River Watershed into a permanent ban has resulted in the proposed fracking ban but the DRBC also included the allowance of frack wastewater discharges and the withdrawal of fresh water for fracking, as instructed by a resolution passed by the DRBC Commissioners at their September 13 public business meeting. The draft regulations were required to be issued by Nov. 30.

Since 2010, scientific analyses, public health statistics, peer-reviewed studies, and government records show that the impacts of gas and oil development significantly harm the environment including our water, air, habitats and communities' health, despite regulatory controls. The experience of communities where fracking is occurring are the proliferation of adverse health impacts due to gas drilling and fracking operations and its inherent air and water pollution. The overwhelming weight of the evidence shows that shale gas cannot be extracted or developed safely, making this the right time to enact a Watershed ban on all gas development.

The five voting members – the Commissioners - of the DRBC are the Governors of the four states whose tributaries flow to the Delaware - Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey and Delaware – and the Army Corps of Engineers, representing the federal government. As an autonomous agency formed under federal law to manage the shared waters of the Basin, the Commission members are responsible for protecting the drinking water supplies of up to 17 million people, including New York City and Philadelphia, and the federally designated Wild and Scenic Delaware River.

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