

*For Immediate Release*

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## **New Jersey Vulnerable to Fracking and Fracking Waste with End of Moratorium**

Today the one year moratorium on natural gas drilling using hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, in New Jersey has come to end. The moratorium went into effect last year after Governor Christie conditionally vetoed an outright ban on fracking within the state to a one year suspension. Governor Christie also vetoed the Fracking Waste Ban Bill that was approved by the Legislature this past year, leaving New Jersey vulnerable to the drilling process itself and the wastes produced by fracking. As the moratorium on fracking for gas ends environmental leaders are calling on the Legislature and Governor to protect us from the dangers of fracking, starting with an override of the Governor's veto of the Frack Waste Ban Bill which is urgently needed to prevent frack waste from being disposed of in the state.

“Governor Christie has failed to protect the people of New Jersey from the dangers of fracking. Instead of having a ban on the drilling practice, we are seeing the moratorium end today. Instead of stopping the disposal of fracking waste in New Jersey, the Governor vetoed the bill. We deserve stronger leadership on this issue and better protections in place, especially in the wake of Hurricane Sandy which showed just how vulnerable our treatment plants and landfills are. The first step to better protecting ourselves from fracking is overriding veto on the fracking waste ban,” **said Jeff Tittel, Director, NJ Sierra Club.**

“Governor Christie is exposing all of us and our drinking water to the risks of pollution that fracking brings by removing all the reasonable and essential safeguards the Legislature enacted to protect us. A big “Dump Here” sign has been hung on New Jersey by Governor Christie, throwing all caution to the wind. We call on our legislators to start to put things right by voting to override the Governor's senseless veto of the Frack Waste Ban Bill,” **said Tracy Carluccio, Deputy Director, Delaware Riverkeeper Network.**

The expiration of the fracking moratorium comes four months after the Governor vetoed the fracking waste ban bill. The legislation passed with overwhelming bipartisan support. Fracking waste presents an immediate threat to New Jersey as instate facilities have already been documented as accepting fracking wastewater, sludges, and drill cuttings. This legislation is the only way to keep the toxic waste from being disposed of in New Jersey. With the expiration of the moratorium, overriding the Governor's veto of this bill is the first action the Legislature should take in advancing protections for New Jerseyans against fracking.

"Fracking will increase our addiction to dirty fossil fuels. We don't want its spoils in our water, its exhaust in our lungs, and its contribution climate disruption not the least of which is more frequent and severe weather like Sandy. If legislators campaign less and govern more by emphasizing good public policy now like banning frack waste and fighting the lifting of the moratorium, they'll be pleasantly surprised in coming elections," **said Dave Pringle, Campaign Director, NJEF.**

Fracking waste contains hundreds of contaminants, including dangerous chemicals and radioactive compounds. By an exemption from federal law, the gas industry is not required to disclose all the chemicals used in the process, and with these unknown additives it is impossible to know the full threat fracking waste presents or how to fully and safely treat the waste. Toxic pollutants that reside in the deep gas-bearing rock are dislodged and regurgitated by the fracking process, adding even more health hazards to the waste that is produced – a chemical stew that even the federal government hasn't figured out how to safely treat. The Frack Waste Ban Bill would have prevented fracking waste from being discharged, treated and disposed of in New Jersey.

"Hurricane Sandy provides us a grim reminder of why we need to move away from extreme energy sources like fracking that are perpetuating climate change while threatening drinking water, public health, and the environment. Christie had two opportunities to lead New Jersey away from this risky and dangerous industry, but instead he caved to pressure from the oil and gas companies, vetoing New Jersey's fracking waste ban and New Jersey's permanent ban on fracking. We need the legislature to move and lead where the Governor continues to fail by overriding the Governor's veto of the fracking waste ban and then moving to ban fracking permanently in New Jersey," **said Jim Walsh, Food & Water Watch.**

During Hurricane Sandy over 20% of New Jersey's wastewater treatment facilities failed, spewing raw and partially treated waste into New Jersey's waterways. Stormwater can also flood the pipes entering treatment plants causing combined sewer overflows with hazardous materials entering waterways. If we allow fracking waste to be dumped and treated in New Jersey that waste could also potentially be discharged without proper treatment, reaching our waterways in such ways during a weather event. This is especially dangerous in light of a recent Stony Brook University study that found that the biggest threat to drinking water supplies from the fracking process came from the disposal of waste water.

"Gov. Christie continues to listen more to the drilling industry than the people of New Jersey. We need the Legislature to step in," **said Doug O'Malley, interim director with Environment New Jersey.** "Our waterways should not be open season for fracking waste, and the Legislature should override the Governor's short-sighted veto."

In his conditional veto of the ban bill, Governor Christie directed the DEP to investigate the adverse air and water impacts of fracking but there is no final deadline for the report. Environmental groups have criticized the DEP's fracking study due to its lack of transparency. There have been no public hearings or public involvement in the investigation. No study scope was announced. The state study is being done while the US EPA continues to examine fracking through a very public process, with their results and recommendations expected in 2014.

“This administration started with a promise of transparency and bipartisanship. On the issue of fracking this administration has failed. It failed to act in a bipartisan manner when it vetoed the fracking ban and the fracking waste ban the last year. It has been anything but transparent in its development of the fracking study. NJ deserves clean water and a healthy environment both which are put in jeopardy by the administration’s failure to act in the best interest of the state,” **said Michael Pisauero, NJ Environmental Lobby.**

“The fact that the fracking industry successfully exempted their industry from compliance with laws to protect our surface water, groundwater, and air makes them a danger to public health and environment. Therefore, it is prudent and in the public interest to prohibit hydro-fracking and not facilitate hydro-fracking activities by allowing waste treatment or LNG exports through New Jersey,” **said Cindy Zipf, Executive Director, Clean Ocean Action.**

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