



**For Immediate Release**

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## ***Our Water, Our Air, Our Communities – and Forced Gas Drilling?***

# **Forum at WHY? Studio and Online Presents the Team that Secured PA Supreme Court Decision Striking Fracking Law and Invigorating Environmental Rights**

**Philadelphia, PA:** Delaware Riverkeeper Network hosts a forum with the lead litigators and litigants of the landmark Act 13 case – the case in which the conservative Pennsylvania Supreme Court declared that the rights of pure water, clean air, and a healthy environment, across the generations, must be protected by state and local legislators.

“The pronouncement of a people’s right to pure water, clean air and a healthy environment is precedent setting for Pennsylvania and the nation. It is important elected officials, appointed government representatives and the public understand what the court really said and what are the next steps for this landmark decision. This forum is the first and only forum that includes the leadership team which secured this precedent setting decision, a decision that is important for the issues of fracking and shale gas but is also important for all decisions that affect our communities and environment,” said Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper.

Speakers will include the legal team that argued the case and secured the decision: Jordan Yeager, John Smith and Jonathan Kamin; as well as lead petitioners: Dave Ball a Councilman for Peters

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Township and Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper and head of Delaware Riverkeeper Network.

The March 13 Forum can be attended in person but also viewed live online. Questions can be submitted by participants viewing the forum either way. Doors will open at 6 pm, the forum will begin at 6:30 pm, and will be followed by a wine and cheese reception for those attending in person. The forum will be held at the WHYY studio in Philadelphia and by Webcast.

The forum will include a discussion of how Act 13 came to be passed, how and why the legal challenge was formulated, including the interesting alliance between the 7 towns and the Delaware Riverkeeper Network, and the implications for environmental, municipal, and legislative decisionmaking going forward.

For information on how to attend the live event or to watch it live streamed over the web go to:

<http://bit.ly/DRN-Act13-ForumRegistration>

The link for watching it live streamed over the web is:

<http://whyy.org/hamiltoncommons/ustream/delriver.html>

The Pennsylvania Supreme Court issued its decision on December 19, 2013. In that decision the Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruled that Act 13 violates the Pennsylvania Constitution on the grounds that it violates the Environmental Rights Amendment. In doing so, the Court held that the right to pure water, clean air and a healthy environment are fundamental rights that must be given high priority consideration and protection by every level of Pennsylvania's government. The Court's decision also struck down the shale gas industry's effort to force every municipality in the state to allow gas drilling and related industrial operations in every zoning district. Chief Justice Castille authored the historic majority opinion. Justices Todd, McCaffrey and Baer joined in the result.

**Background:** Seven municipalities, Maya van Rossum in her capacity as the Delaware Riverkeeper, the Delaware Riverkeeper Network, and Dr. Mehernosh Khan filed the initial legal pleading in Commonwealth Court on March 29, 2012 challenging Act 13, also known as HB1950, which was signed into law by Governor Corbett on February 14, 2012. The municipalities are: Township of Nockamixon and the Borough of Yardley, Bucks County; Township of Robinson, Peters Township, Township of Cecil, Mount Pleasant Township, Washington County; Township of South Fayette, Allegheny County.

The Decision and concurring opinion can be found at:

[http://bit.ly/act13\\_decision](http://bit.ly/act13_decision)

<http://bit.ly/act13concur>

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