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Contacts:

Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper (office and cell) 215-369-1188x102  
Tracy Carluccio, Deputy Director for the Delaware Riverkeeper Network  
(Office) 215-369-1188x104 (cell) 215-692-2329

**ProPublica Issues News Story on Expert Reports  
In Legal Challenge to the Delaware River Basin Commission's Decision to Grandfather  
"Exploratory" Gas Wells**

*New York, New York* – On Monday, December 6, 2010, ProPublica, (<http://www.propublica.org/>), an independent investigative news agency, published a news about the expert reports on natural gas drilling that were commissioned by Delaware Riverkeeper Network (DRN) and Damascus Citizens for Sustainability (DCS) in legal proceedings before the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC). DRN and DCS have challenged the DRBC's decision to "grandfather" a number of vertical "exploratory" wells rather than require them to undergo environmental review by the DRBC to ensure the protection of the Delaware River Basin watershed. The story can be found at:

<http://www.propublica.org/article/beyond-fracking-experts-challenge-safety-of-exploratory-wells-vertical-dril>

ProPublica won the Pulitzer Prize for Investigative Reporting in April 2010. The Manhattan-based news outlet is an independent, non-profit newsroom that produces investigative journalism in the public interest. As stated on its website: "Our work focuses exclusively on truly important stories, stories with 'moral force.' We do this by producing journalism that shines a light on exploitation of the weak by the strong and on the failures of those with power to vindicate the trust placed in them." Its mission is "To expose abuses of power and betrayals of the public trust by government, business, and other institutions, using the moral force of investigative journalism to spur reform through the sustained spotlighting of

wrongdoing.” ProPublica is a recognized and celebrated leader in reporting on natural gas development in the United States.

One set of reports discussed in the article was commissioned by Delaware Riverkeeper Network (DRN) and Damascus Citizens for Sustainability (DCS) from scientific experts to examine the potential for impacts to Special Protection Waters from exploratory natural gas wells in the Delaware River Watershed.

DRBC decided to allow a minimum of 11 so-called “exploratory” natural gas wells to evade DRBC review and regulation in the Watershed. DRN and DCS legally contested this decision. A leaseholders’ organization, Northern Wayne Property Owners Alliance, filed a challenge to the DRBC objecting to its jurisdiction over exploratory wells at the same time; DRN and DCS filed to defend the DRBC’s jurisdiction. Hess and Newfield Corporations, owners of some of the wells, filed to press to get their wells drilled.

Legal proceedings commenced this past summer and the appointed Hearing Officer consolidated all the hearing requests into one Administrative Hearing. A schedule was set out by Judge Edward N.Cahn, the former Chief Judge of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania who was appointed by the DRBC as the Hearing Officer. DRN and DCS commissioned these expert reports as part of that process.

The DRBC itself filed a second set of expert reports to defend its decision to regulate exploratory wells as well as its decision to “grandfather” the wells in question. The well drillers and the leaseholders will file their expert reports December 24.

The reports are discussed in the ProPublica story at <http://www.propublica.org/article/beyond-fracking-experts-challenge-safety-of-exploratory-wells-vertical-drill>

The reports are available on DRN’s website at

[http://www.delawariverkeeper.org/resources/Reports/DRN\\_DCS\\_Expert\\_Reports.pdf](http://www.delawariverkeeper.org/resources/Reports/DRN_DCS_Expert_Reports.pdf)

[http://www.delawariverkeeper.org/resources/Reports/DRBC\\_Expert\\_Reports\\_Gas.pdf](http://www.delawariverkeeper.org/resources/Reports/DRBC_Expert_Reports_Gas.pdf)

For more information on the legal proceedings and other resources see “Learn More” at:

<http://delawariverkeeper.org/act-now/urgent-details.aspx?id=62>

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