

Watershed Wednesdays Week 1: Fracking Pollutes water

- Fracking pollutes groundwater, harming people who depend on water wells. Pennsylvania has documented 302 cases of private water well contamination, despite regulation. This contamination is intolerable in the Delaware River Watershed or anywhere.
- Fracking is destroying the environment. Over 9,000 public complaints about environmental problems in shale gas drilling areas have been reported in Pennsylvania; 4,400 of those are surface or groundwater-related. Even with regulation, fracking pollution is a fact of life and cannot be effectively controlled.
- Up to 17 million people get their water from the Delaware River Watershed, including NYC and Philadelphia, and there's nowhere else they can get it. The only way to fully protect our water resources is by fully banning it - banning fracking, frack wastewater discharges and water withdrawals for fracking.

Background Information

Please feel free to take this additional information into account as you write your comments. We highly encourage personalizing comments as much as possible. Thank you!!

Fracking pollutes water, even when the operations are regulated. If allowed in the Delaware River Watershed, over 15 million people's water would be at risk.¹ Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP) has determined that there are 302 cases of private water well contamination caused by oil and gas operations in the Commonwealth² and the number increases regularly as more cases are reported and investigated. And that number doesn't cover the whole story –for instance, methane migration into water wells from fracking is not being counted by PADEP as a pollution incident.³ And many of the 302 “cases” represent multiple wells and large aquifer areas, as many as 16 water wells and, in the case of Dimock, nine square miles of aquifer were contaminated.

Over 4,400 water complaints related to oil and gas have been filed by the public with PADEP. Between 2004 and 11.2016, PADEP lists 9,443 public complaints about environmental problems in shale gas drilling areas.⁴ As fracking has progressed in Pennsylvania, instead of practices improving and the adoption of new regulations by

¹http://www.nj.gov/drbc/library/documents/ResforMinutes091317_natgas-initiate-rulemkg.pdf

²http://files.dep.state.pa.us/OilGas/BOGM/BOGMPortalFiles/OilGasReports/Determination_Letters/Regional_Determination_Letters.pdf

³<http://www.nationofchange.org/2017/01/31/9442-citizen-reported-fracking-complaints-reveal-12-years-suppressed-data/>

⁴<https://stateimpact.npr.org/pennsylvania/2017/01/31/data-trove-offers-new-details-on-complaints-to-dep-during-shale-boom/> and https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1_tg1zTCA-xTmFk4erdcYJt4zqmQZ9x89qliQg55zekg/edit#gid=1060152199 and <https://maps.fractracker.org/latest/?appid=f973714e27c14e1ebee222d2560f8cb0>

PADEP reducing gas and oil operation-related complaints, the ratio of complaints has increased.⁵ The Pennsylvania data from the shale fields supports the finding that fracking simply cannot be done safely, no matter how it is regulated or what “best practices” are employed.

⁵<http://publicherald.org/hidden-data-suggests-fracking-created-widespread-systemic-impact-in-pennsylvania/>