

For Immediate Release

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Contact: Jeff Tittel, Director, NJ Sierra Club, 609-558-9100
Seth Gladstone, Communications Manager, Eastern Region, 718-943-806
Fred Stine, Citizen Action Coordinator, Delaware Riverkeeper Network, 856-816-8021

Coalition Calls for Override of Fracking Waste Ban Bill Before Summer Break
Legislature Must Take Action Soon to Put Protections in Place

Trenton, NJ – A broad coalition of environmental, community, labor and faith-based groups from around the state are calling on members of the New Jersey Legislature to put in place protections against toxic fracking waste before representatives leave for the summer break. The Legislature passed a bill last year banning the disposal, treatment, and discharge of waste created through the process of hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, for natural gas. However the Governor vetoed the bill in September and an override vote is needed to protect New Jersey against this toxic threat.

“The New Jersey legislature got it right when they voted for the fracking waste ban. Now they need to override the Governor’s veto if New Jersey’s communities and natural resources are to be protected from the mess of frack waste. In Pennsylvania, it seems as if every headline about fracking is worse than the last – contaminated private water wells, waste too radioactive for landfills, fracking waste spills, and a DEP too broken to stay on top of any of it. It’s miserable and I know I speak for Pennsylvanians everywhere when I say that misery does not love company when it comes to toxic fracking waste,” said **Karen Feridun, Founder, Berks Gas Truth**.

The **bill A575** passed the Legislature with overwhelming bipartisan support and the groups are calling on those legislators to vote “yes” a second time to protect drinking water. The coalition unveiled a new symbol for the campaign, **Oily the Ostrich**. Oily will be traveling to key districts asking key legislators not to bury their head in the sand, but to take action now and ban fracking waste

Check out Oily’s FB page: <http://www.facebook.com/ostrich>

“New Jersey cannot become the dumping ground for frack waste. If the Legislature doesn’t act to prohibit these toxic materials from being discharged here, our waterways and communities are an easy place to put the billions of gallons of waste that shale gas wells are producing and can be expected to continue to generate not only in Pennsylvania but in New Jersey too. As the gas craze continues undeterred, the toxic waste will flow and unless there’s a law to stop it being dumped here, it will find its way into our drinking water and landfills. We ask our legislators to stand up to protect us by prohibiting this waste in New Jersey,” said **Fred Stine, Citizen Action Coordinator, Delaware Riverkeeper Network**.

The event today is the first in a series of rallies and actions across the state to build support for a vote before the end of June. Activists will be bringing the Ostriches and petitions to key districts asking representatives to take action.

This bill can protect our drinking water and environment from industry waste that can contain over 700 chemicals and radioactive materials. Companies in New Jersey have already accepted wastewater, drill cuttings, and sludges in the past. Earlier this year researchers at Duke and Kent State found that the wastewater produced in fracking “threatens to overwhelm the region's wastewater disposal capacity”.

"Governor Christie's silly excuses for vetoing the Fracking Waste Ban Bill prove he has been bought off by the oil and gas industry. Subjecting New Jersey to the toxic fracking leftovers from other states is a public health disaster waiting to happen," said **Jim Walsh, regional director of Food & Water Watch**. "Since the governor won't stand up and protect residents from this danger, we are hopeful that our legislators will, as they did last year."

There is strong public support for the bill, with thousands of residents contacting the Governor's office and Legislators.

The NJ Department of Environmental Protection recently revised guidelines on this type of waste but has not prohibited its disposal in New Jersey. The public does not know if fracking waste is being disposed of today because public reporting requirements are inadequate.

New Jersey's wastewater treatment facilities are not designed to handle the toxins found in fracking wastewater and cannot remove all the toxics before discharging the waste into our waterways. This could potentially lead to the discharge of dangerously high levels of harmful pollutants, including radioactive materials, into waterways and groundwater, and, in turn, into our drinking water. The New York Times found in 2011 wastewater was sent to treatment plants in Pennsylvania that could not handle the waste properly, resulting in the discharge of partially treated waste into waterways at 12 plants^[1]. The Pennsylvania DEP reports that between 2009 and 2012, radiation alarms went off 1,325 times at landfills- over 1,000 of those alerts were triggered by oil and gas waste.

Fracking waste is exempted from critical federal protections regulating the disposal of hazardous waste and hazardous materials. This free pass from important standards increases the risks to public health and the environment. There are also safety concerns with the transportation of the waste into and around the state. There could be accidental spills as fracking waste is being trucked to treatment plants and landfills harming local communities, water bodies and groundwater.

The Fracking Waste Ban Bill passed the Assembly 56-19 and the Senate 30-5. For an override vote 27 votes are needed in the Senate and 54 votes are needed in the Assembly.

“Right now New Jersey's waterways are being held hostage by the gas companies. Fracking waste being dumped in our waterways could have disastrous effects on drinking water. The Legislature must stand up and protect New Jersey's drinking water, rivers, and streams by overriding the Governor's veto. That is why we are here today launching this campaign demanding a ban on fracking waste and an override of the Governor's veto,” said **Jeff Tittel, Director, NJ Sierra Club**.

^[1] Urbina, Ian. “Regulation lax as gas gas wells' tainted water hits rivers.” *New York Times*. February 26, 2011

As New Jersey continues the battle to keep fracking waste out of our waterways, director Josh Fox has released his second film on the dangerous natural gas drilling practice: GASLAND Part II. **Josh will be here in New Jersey on June 15th for 2 screenings** of his new film at the State Museum. Josh Fox selected Trenton as one of the few locations in his Grassroots Tour to help us impress on the legislature the critical importance of the override vote

There is a 4:00 pm screening:

http://org2.salsalabs.com/o/6791/p/salsa/event/common/public/?event_KEY=66997

and a 7:00 pm screening:

http://org2.salsalabs.com/o/6791/p/salsa/event/common/public/?event_KEY=67110