



For Immediate Release
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Hudson Valley Foie Gras Permit Approval Held Up
Waste Discharge Violations Questioned

West Trenton, New Jersey – Hudson Valley Foie Gras (HVFG), a Confined Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) in Sullivan County, NY, did not receive the approval they requested from the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) at the Commission’s regularly scheduled business meeting July 10. HVFG raises, slaughters, and processes ducks in order to harvest the birds’ livers known as *foie gras*¹. The facility is located near Ferndale and operates a wastewater treatment facility that discharges into the Middle Mongaup River. The Middle Mongaup River flows to the Mongaup River, through the Swinging Bridge Reservoir and into the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River about 6 miles north of Pt. Jervis, NY.

The facility is permitted by NY Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) to discharge 20,000 gallons of wastewater per day to the river. Its location in the Upper Delaware Special Protection Waters is protected by DRBC water quality regulations and must be evaluated to ensure the operations do not degrade the high quality waters of this part of the Delaware River Watershed.

HVFG had filed an application with DRBC for a renewal of their existing industrial wastewater treatment plant and its discharge. The DRBC Hearing for all “dockets” – or permits – under consideration was held July 9 and the business meeting where the DRBC Commissioners vote was July 10 – both held in Wilmington, Delaware. Delaware Riverkeeper Network (DRN)

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Foie_gras - *foie gras*, French for "fat liver" - a [food product](#) made of the [liver](#) of a [duck](#) or [goose](#) that has been specially fattened. By French law, foie gras is defined as the liver of a duck fattened by [force feeding](#) corn with a [gavage](#), although outside of France it is occasionally produced using natural feeding.

submitted written comment and verbal testimony at the July 9 Hearing in opposition to the docket based on concerns for the impacts of the facility on the water quality of the Middle Mongaup River and downstream waters.

DRN brought to the DRBC's attention 2 violations of HVFG's permit limit for Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) (monthly mean) in May and June of 2011 that the organization discovered in a review of DRBC files. DRN pointed out that TDS is a pollutant and can be toxic to aquatic life, particularly macroinvertebrates such as mayfly that form the base of the food chain for the fish in the river. It was also pointed in DRN's comment out that since there were no monitoring reports more recent than June 2011 in the DRBC's files, it was unknown if TDS violations continued after that and into the present or if there were other problems with the discharges. Also highlighted in the testimony was that HVFG had in the past violated their NYSDEC discharge permit hundreds of times before refitting the wastewater plant several years ago. DRN had advocated for a clean-up of the facility in 2007-2008; the treatment plant was upgraded after that. DRN also brought attention to the potential for polluted runoff from the fields where the manure from the *foie gras* facility is spread.

DRBC Commissioners voted to table approval of the renewal permit to further investigate the plant's operations and performance. The next meeting of the DRBC is in September 2013.

"Hudson Valley Foie Gras is a large operation that produces lots of waste. Some goes to their wastewater plant and some, such as manure, is spread on fields under their CAFO permit. Many people don't even know this facility exists on the river they swim in, fish in, canoe and kayak in. The Middle Mongaup, the Mongaup River and the Swinging Bridge Reservoir are popular recreational waterways with many summer camps, and lots of swimming, boating and fishing. We are concerned about any pollution from this facility to this local river and to the downstream Wild and Scenic Delaware River. We appreciate the DRBC's willingness to investigate this operation further. It is very important that the people who use and enjoy the river and the fish and animals that live here are protected from polluted waste and that people can have confidence that HVFG is not fouling the water", said Tracy Carluccio, Deputy Director, Delaware Riverkeeper Network.

A copy of Delaware Riverkeeper Network's comment to DRBC can be found at:

<http://www.delawariverkeeper.org/resources/Comments/DRN%20comment%20to%20DRBC%20HVFG%207.9.13.pdf>

A copy of the proposed DRBC docket for Hudson Valley Foie Gras can be found at:

<http://www.delawariverkeeper.org/resources/Reports/DRBC%20docket%20draft%202013.pdf>

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