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Organizations Call for a DRBC Vote for Full Fracking Ban

Delaware River Basin Governors Pledge Full Ban on Fracking, Frack Waste, and Water for fracking – Groups call for a vote to codify

West Trenton, NJ – Members of the public are speaking out at the Delaware River Basin Commission's (DRBC) public meeting today at the West Trenton Fire Company Hall. Representatives of advocacy groups from throughout the region are calling for the Commissioners to vote as soon as possible to adopt a full ban on fracking throughout the Delaware River Watershed, including banning the treatment, storage and disposal of wastewater produced by fracking, and banning the export of water from the Watershed to enable fracking elsewhere.

On May 16 at the Delaware River Governors Summit, New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy, Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf and Delaware Governor John Carney, each stated publicly their intention to ban fracking and associated activities in the Basin. New York Governor Andrew Cuomo was unable to attend the Summit but is expected to support the full ban; New York banned fracking in 2014. The Governors of the four states and the Army Corps of Engineers representing the federal government, make up the five voting members of the Commission.

Representatives of advocacy groups that make up the Delaware River Frack Ban Coalition cited the overwhelming evidence of harms to public health and myriad adverse

environmental impacts as support for the Governors to carve the full ban in stone. Draft hydraulic fracturing regulations were proposed in November 2017 with a public comment period that closed March 31, 2018. No public action has been taken by DRBC since then.

“The time has come for DRBC to act to fully ban fracking and all its activities in the Delaware River watershed,” said **Doug O’Malley, director of Environment New Jersey**. Governor Murphy’s clarion call for a full fracking & fracking waste ban this winter has now been joined by his fellow Governors in Pennsylvania and Delaware. Three’s a crowd and a majority, and we urge the DRBC to move forward to finally shut the door on all future fracking activity in the Delaware River watershed.”

“DRBC is responsible for protecting the water resources of the Delaware River Watershed and, in that role, is the ultimate decider about activities that could harm the River. A majority of the Commissioners have pledged their vote for a full fracking ban, so now is the time to actually carry it out. We call on the Governors of our Watershed to take the vote now – adopt the full ban on fracking, frack waste and water exports for fracking elsewhere,” **said Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper**.

“The DRBC needs to act and put in place a full fracking ban quickly. With three Governors calling for a full ban, the DRBC must act now. The Commission needs to adopt a full fracking ban that will not allow dumping of fracking waste or taking of water for fracking activities elsewhere. A full ban on fracking will not only protect the Delaware River and drinking water for 15 million people but will block dangerous facilities that would impact the Basin,” **said Jeff Tittel, Director of the New Jersey Sierra Club**. “We need the DRBC to stand up to the Basin and adopt a full fracking ban!”

““The time has come for the Delaware River Basin Commission to vote for a full ban on fracking and all of its associated activities in the watershed,” said **Rob Friedman, Policy Advocate, Natural Resources Defense Council**. “A full ban would not only keep drilling out of the Delaware River Basin, but toxic wastewater too—and it would not allow companies to take freshwater from the basin for drilling elsewhere. We urge the Commissioners to call for a vote and to protect this region from the dangers of fracking.”

“The Commissioners must vote to ban fracking, frack waste, and water withdrawals for fracking now rather than allow uncertainty to continue to cloud the future of the Delaware River Watershed. We know fracking is ruining communities and health studies are showing more devastating health effects as fracking continues and spreads in the Marcellus Shale. We also know the heavy economic costs of fracking’s harms are piling up, with the public paying the price of water pollution, lost resources, and long term environmental degradation. Where would up to 15 million people who rely on the Delaware go for water? The risks are too great, the full ban must be approved right away,” **said Tracy Carluccio, Deputy Director, Delaware Riverkeeper Network.**

“We look forward to seeing a formal vote by the DRBC to permanently ban all fracking and fracking-related activities in the Delaware River Basin. The proposed regulations from 2017 raised a number of serious questions in Delaware: Would there be a rush to dump “treated” wastes at Delaware’s northern border, where juvenile Atlantic sturgeon dwell, because disposal of liquids with high levels of dissolved salts would be permitted there? Who would decide if wastes were sufficiently “treated” to remove all toxic compounds when information about such compounds is known to be incomplete and/or inaccurate? Would the lower Delaware River and the Delaware Bay be contaminated by radioactive materials leached from unregulated disposal of solid fracking wastes along the Delaware River or its tributaries? The ecology of the lower Delaware is too economically important and too fragile to be put at risk,” **said Coralie Pryde, Delaware Sierra Club.**

"After years of uncertainty, now that a majority of the DRBC is on record supporting a complete and total ban on fracking throughout the Delaware River Watershed, it's time to get it done. Banning fracking, including the importation of toxic frack wastewater into the Basin and the exportation of water for fracking outside the Basin, is past due to protect the region’s water resources for drinking, recreation, economic prosperity, healthy ecosystems, and to combat the climate crisis," **said Eric Benson, Clean Water Action.**

“Allowing frack waste into the river basin, a source of drinking water for millions of people, would be just as damaging as fracking itself. Governor Murphy, along with his

counterparts in Pennsylvania and Delaware, support a plan to save this precious source of clean drinking water by supporting the strongest, most comprehensive ban on fracking, one that includes banning fracking waste and water withdrawals for drilling companies. It's time for the DRBC to put that policy to a vote," **said Food & Water Watch organizer Junior Romero.**

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