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***From the Organizations Working for the Complete Fracking Ban***

**Frack Ban Coalition Expects Historic Event February 25**

ZOOM meeting – The Delaware River Frack Ban Coalition is looking forward to a historic vote at the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) special meeting announced for Thursday Feb. 25, 10:30 am. The meeting was publicly noticed yesterday by DRBC as a virtual meeting, with no public comment opportunity, for “final action on DRBC’s Proposed Amendments to the Administrative Manual and Special Regulations Regarding Hydraulic Fracturing Activities”. The DRBC voting members are the Governors of the four states that flow to the Delaware – New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, and Delaware – and a federal representative for President Biden from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The draft gas regulations were issued for public comment on November 30, 2017. How to join the meeting: [https://www.nj.gov/drbc/meetings/meeting\\_feb252021.html](https://www.nj.gov/drbc/meetings/meeting_feb252021.html)

In the three years since the public comment period closed on March 30, 2018, organizations and the public have been advocating for a full ban to be enacted on fracking and its operations in the Delaware River Watershed. The proposed gas rules would permanently ban fracking throughout the entire Delaware River Watershed but would allow wastewater produced by fracking to be imported and processed, stored and discharged here and would allow water to be withdrawn to fuel fracking outside of the basin. The Coalition and the public have fiercely opposed the halfway measure of banning fracking but allowing frack wastewater to be dumped in the river and water to be exported and consumed to spur fracking, instead calling for a FULL fracking ban. Tens of thousands of people submitted comments to the DRBC calling for a FULL frack

ban, over 100,000 petitions were submitted, and the Coalition has attended every DRBC public meeting since 2017 to present scientific, public health, and environmental evidence about the devastating impacts of fracking, frack wastewater, and water depletion caused by fracking.

In January 2019, NJ Governor Phil Murphy sent a letter to the DRBC stating that he was prepared to vote for a complete watershed-wide permanent ban on fracking and its associated activities, including a ban on wastewater storage, processing and discharges in the Basin. In doing so, Governor Murphy cited the dangers of fracking chemicals, the hazardous materials that fracking produces, fracking wastewater's secret toxic chemicals, and the dangers of damage to the water supplies of the Delaware River Watershed. In follow up news articles to a public DRBC Summit where Governor Murphy verbally stated his support for the full ban, both PA Governor Tom Wolf and DE Governor John Carney expressed support for the complete ban as well. NY Governor Cuomo has permanently banned shale gas fracking in New York State.

The Coalition considers President Biden's new policy to decarbonize our energy sources and protect our environment and water supplies through strict regulation to translate into a position of support for the full frack ban; under the Trump Administration, the Army Corps has consistently voted against any ban on fracking. The Coalition submitted a white paper "Why a Full Ban on Fracking is Required in the Delaware River Watershed" to the Biden Administration last month.

It is expected that many members of the public will attend the DRBC virtual meeting and since the huge demonstrations that have marked these meetings in the past cannot occur due to the pandemic, people will join the zoom meeting to witness the "final action" the Governors and President Biden will take.

"The Governors of the Delaware River Watershed have promised the people protection from the ravages of fracking. President Biden has promised the people of our nation a changed way of doing business; one that honors environmental protection and justice over the greed and power of industry. It's time that they fulfill their promises. All eyes from across our watershed and the generations that will be impacted by the decision DRBC makes on fracking, will be tuning in on February 25<sup>th</sup> to bear witness to the actions taken by Governor Murphy, Governor Cuomo, Governor Carney, Governor Wolf and President Biden as the designated Commissioners. We are hopeful they will go down in history as the leaders who helped save our communities, environment, and economy from fracking devastation. We will be ready to hold them to account if they betray us," said **Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper and leader of the Delaware Riverkeeper Network.**

"The DRBC is finally going to vote on banning fracking in the Delaware River Basin. It is long overdue. Now we need to make sure that they vote for a full ban

including banning fracking waste and taking water out of the Basin. This is critical for the future of the Basin and to protect the drinking water for 15 million people,” **said Jeff Tittel, Director of the New Jersey Sierra Club.** “Governor Murphy came out for a full ban 4 years ago, and he signed a letter to DRBC supported by Governors Carney and Wolf in 2018 supporting a full ban. Now they need to keep their word. We cannot have a partial ban that actually allows the dumping of fracking waste that still puts the drinking water and environment of the Basin at risk. The DRBC needs to stand up for the Basin and ban fracking and fracking waste.”

“For more than a decade we have provided Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) with the scientific evidence of threats to our health, the impacts to the ecology of the river and the region, and the threat of impacting the drinking water for millions of people. During the public comment period at least 40,000 comments to the DRBC were in support of a full ban on fracking and all drilling-related activities, including wastewater treatment and water withdrawals. This better be the moment in history where the agency listens to the people and the science and makes the right choice for the future of the basin,” **said Wes Gillingham, Associate Director, Catskill Mountainkeeper.**

"We hope and trust that Governor Carney will keep his promise to vote for a complete ban of ALL fracking activities in the Delaware River Basin. Delaware gains no benefits from such activities, but is at risk for grave damage to the Delaware Estuary and Bay from toxic pollution if fracking wastes are allowed to enter our watershed," **said Coralie Pryde, League of Women Voters Delaware.**

"A majority of the Delaware River Basin Commission member states is already on record supporting a complete and total ban on fracking throughout the Delaware River Watershed. Now is the 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, NJ Campaign Director, Clean Water Action.**

"New York's drinking water is at risk from fracking in the Delaware River Basin, and our climate is threatened by the dangerous drilling practice. It's time for Governor Cuomo to help finish the job and support a complete ban on fracking in the Delaware River Basin," **said Eric Weltman, a New York-based senior organizer with Food & Water Watch.** "This means a permanent ban on drilling, fracking waste, and water withdrawals for fracking. Anything less recklessly endangers our health, communities, and environment."

“This vote to ban fracking is a long time coming for the Delaware River watershed and the 15 million people that depend on its drinking water. For more than a

decade, the public has been demanding for DRBC to act to fully ban all fracking activities in the watershed. Gov. Murphy campaigned on banning all fracking in the Delaware River watershed four years ago and two years ago formally asked for the DRBC to strengthen its proposed regulations to include a full ban on fracking activities in the watershed. The evidence on the danger of fracking to our water supplies has only gotten stronger, and we need Gov. Murphy to urge his fellow governors to keep their commitments for a full ban. The time is now for the DRBC to permanently ban all fracking and fracking waste from the Delaware River watershed,” **said Doug O’Malley, director of Environment New Jersey.**

**B. Arrindell, Director of Damascus Citizens for Sustainability, insisted that,** “From its inception the DRBC’s mission and work has been to protect public health by keeping the Delaware River clean. The Commission has been very successful - the River is not the stinking sewer it was before DRBC’s inception. One of its formation documents places prevention in the forefront saying that it is so much better to prevent pollution rather than try to clean up after. Only a full ban will prevent fracking damage. Three of the 4 basin Governors have endorsed a full ban in the Basin, they must follow through on their promise to us”.

“After more than a decade of struggle to see a fracking ban enacted in the Delaware River Watershed, we anticipate a vote that will make history. The DRBC was formed to ensure that the decisions made in our Watershed are made based on what is best for the watershed and the communities, human and nonhuman, that live here and the 17 million people who rely on the Delaware River for drinking water. When we join the meeting, it will be in the spirit of ‘We are watching for you to fulfill your promise by voting to enact a full ban on fracking and its activities’. Nothing less will provide the protection needed for our outstanding, exceptional quality, yet vulnerable river from the ravages of fracking and its polluting waste and water degradation,” **said Tracy Carluccio, Deputy Director, Delaware Riverkeeper Network.**

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