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**The Public is Demanding a Permanent Ban on Fracking in the
Delaware River Watershed**

Despite Pennsylvania Legislators' fronting for industry's special interests, the public opposes the pollution fracking would bring to the Delaware's water, land and air

Waymart, Pennsylvania – A mounting call for transforming the current moratorium on natural gas drilling, fracking and related activities in the Delaware River Watershed into a permanent ban has resulted in the potential for the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) to ban or partially ban fracking and its activities.

In response the Republican House Majority Policy Committee set a meeting in Wayne County today to beat the drum for the gas industry, pushing for the moratorium to be lifted so fracking can begin. However, the State Legislature has no jurisdiction over the decisions of the DRBC and the Policy Committee carries no authority with the federal-interstate agency, responsible for managing and protecting the Delaware River's water resources, raising questions about the Committee's motives. Speakers who are pro-drilling industry were lined up to speak with no dissenters or independent scientists or health professionals on the published schedule.

The five voting members – the Commissioners - of the DRBC are the Governors of the four states whose tributaries flow to the Delaware - Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey and Delaware – and the Army Corps of Engineers, representing the federal government. As an autonomous agency formed under federal law to manage the shared waters of the Basin, the Commission members are responsible for protecting the drinking water supplies of 17 million people, including New York City and Philadelphia, and the federally designated Wild and Scenic Delaware River. The DRBC's responsibility, carried out by the Commissioners, is to all of those dependent on the river's waters and to the species and other outstanding assets that are the foundation of the river's communities, economy and environmental quality.

Since 2010, the DRBC has prohibited natural gas extraction projects in the Delaware River Basin while they study its potential impacts on water resources, a de-

facto moratorium that does not allow permits to be issued until natural gas regulations are adopted.

“Damascus Citizens for Sustainability (DCS) has tracked and recorded individuals and communities suffering near drilling and its infrastructure for years with more and more peer reviewed science to show the damages that fracking and drilling cause to those who are being impacted. Over and over again the scientific reports show public health suffers greatly near drilling. The drilling industry fought hard to get their exemptions from our major federal environmental protection laws – laws that every other industry has to follow. They did so to escape liability for the damages they knew were unavoidable. Now they want more – to spread their industry even further but we won’t stand for it”, **said Barbara Arrindell, Director, and Damascus Citizens for Sustainability.**

“Drilling and fracking in our watershed would have devastating health, economic, and environmental impacts. This blatantly biased hearing is designed to ignore all that,” said, **Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper.**

Evidence of the growing public support for a total ban on fracking include: the submission of over 65,000 petitions to the DRBC Commissioners in July; hundreds of people attending the DRBC’s public meetings in recent months demanding a permanent and complete ban; and the public’s gearing up for a comment period to commence when the DRBC issues draft natural gas regulations by Nov. 30.

Residents and advocacy groups point out that the Delaware River’s water is now clean because of Special Protection Waters regulations that don’t allow degradation of it’s exceptionally high water quality. The overwhelming weight of the scientific evidence shows that shale gas cannot be extracted or developed safely and to do so would cause irreparable harm to communities and the environment.

A Coalition of groups, communities, and residents are fully committed to advancing the movement for a complete and permanent ban on natural gas drilling, fracking and related activities throughout the Delaware River Watershed. For more information about the Coalition, contact Tracy Carluccio, Delaware Riverkeeper Network, 215.369.1188x104, tracy@delawariverkeeper.org.

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