



**For Immediate Release**

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## **Delaware Riverkeeper Resigns From Citizens Marcellus Shale Commission**

*10/20/11, Bristol, PA* – Days before the Citizens Marcellus Shale Commission is scheduled to release its final report and recommendations, Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper, resigned from her post as a Commissioner for the group.

“While the final report will contain a number of good recommendations for reforming regulations needed to protect communities from the ravages of shale gas drilling, the Citizens Commission came up short in important ways including – it didn’t notice and implement its 5 statewide hearings so as to ensure full participation by all citizens who wanted to speak to the gas drilling issue; and it failed to give voice to the clear message and need that resulted from hearing testimony that there should be a stay on gas drilling until identified minimum protections for public health and the environment are first achieved,” said Maya van Rossum. “In the final analysis, the Commission’s leadership insisted on what they deemed a politically palatable report, rather than one which fully served to seek protections from known harms and informational deficiencies associated with shale gas development,” van Rossum said.

“The failure to articulate a need for a moratorium on further drilling and/or drilling permits until needed protections were put in place and needed studies to inform those regulations are done was a conscious oversight. The lack of publicity over the hearings needed to ensure citizen awareness of the opportunity to speak out on this important issue was another major short coming,” said van Rossum.

van Rossum continues: “The Delaware Riverkeeper Network has worked for over 4 years to protect communities and their waterways from shale gas extraction. A current moratorium on drilling in the

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Delaware Watershed has remained in effect for over two and a half years even with pressure from drillers who have leased large swaths of the Basin. Why should the Delaware River enjoy a stay/moratorium on drilling while other areas of Pennsylvania are allowed to be sacrificed, especially in light of the science and expert opinion showing irreparable harm where gas development is occurring, that the technology is inherently polluting, and that current regulations are not protecting Pennsylvanians? All Pennsylvanians deserve protection from the ravages of gas drilling. The moratorium in the Delaware Basin has been supported by tens of thousands of Pennsylvanians in written and spoken comments. PA legislators including Rep. Vitali, Rep Quinn, Rep Cohen, Rep Freeman, Rep. Payton, Rep O'Brien, Rep Miccozzie, Rep Curry, and Rep Santarsiero submitted comment to the DRBC requesting a hold on drilling until full environmental reviews are done. Just last week Philadelphia City Council members unanimously voted to join a lawsuit led by Delaware Riverkeeper Network to compel DRBC to do a comprehensive environmental review before drilling is allowed to proceed in the basin. With all of these facts and such widespread support for the moratorium concept, including from those that testified before the Citizens Commission, how can the Commission say a stay is not palatable? With what we heard from those that did participate in the hearings, myself and my organization simply could not condone or support these major failings," van Rossum concluded.

The Citizens Marcellus Shale Commission was first announced August 30, 2011, and held 5 hearings in September, the first held on just one day after public announcement of the Commission in the Pittsburgh area.

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