



For Immediate Release: January 20, 2015

Contacts:

Sam Bernhardt, Food and Water Watch, 267-428-1903, sbernhardt@fwwatch.org

Tracy Carluccio, Delaware Riverkeeper Network, 215-692-2329, tracy@delawareriverkeeper.org

Karen Feridun, Berks Gas Truth, 610-678-7726, berksgastruth@gmail.com

Briget Shields, Marcellus Protest, Friends of the Harmed, 412-799-3236, brigetshields@gmail.com

Diane Sipe, Marcellus Outreach Butler, 724-272-4539, sipediane5@gmail.com

Activists Greet Wolf at Inauguration
with Call to Stop Fracking

[Harrisburg, PA] — Today, Pennsylvanians Against Fracking, a new coalition of groups from around the Keystone State working to halt fracking, gathered in Harrisburg with hundreds of activists to greet Governor Wolf and urge him to make stopping fracking a priority. Pennsylvanians from all corners of the state converged on Harrisburg's Grace United Methodist Church to hear from lead advocates and experts at a pre-rally press conference. Attendees then marched down Walnut Street to the Inauguration grandstands where they held a rally throughout the ceremony. Chants of "Fracking PA? Our Answer is No!" met Governor Wolf, a reference to New York State's recent ban on fracking.

Several spoke of New York's recent ban and concerns the negative health consequences of fracking. According to Josh Fox, the award-winning director of *Gasland* and *Gasland Part II*, "New York banned fracking based on solid science that says fracking is harmful to people - people who live near it suffer effects of air pollution, water contamination and health risks, people who live downstream from it suffer from regional air pollution and contaminated public water supplies and all people who live on the planet suffer the effects of fracking's increased greenhouse gas emissions and global climate change. Governor Tom Wolf inherited insane policies on fracking but he does not have to continue these policies. The choice is Governor Wolf's - listen to science and to the harmed citizens of PA or be on the wrong side of history."

“In our rush to develop shale gas, PA has created some economic winners, but we have put many other Pennsylvanians in harm’s way,” said Raina Rippel, Director of Southwest Pennsylvania Environmental Health Project. “After three years of dedicated work, EHP understands that the scale of protecting these Pennsylvanians demands the full participation of the PA Department of Health and the commitment of our Governor.”

Those from frontline communities spoke passionately about the reality in PA. Diane Sipe of Marcellus Outreach Butler made it clear what’s on the line: “While Gov. Wolf says with respect to unconventional gas that he wants his cake and to eat it too, we in the shale fields understand that the gas industry will eat the whole cake. This is what an extreme extraction process does--it creates sacrifice zones of the places where it operates. This industry will take the gas and its profits and leave Pennsylvania a legacy of an unhealthy and damaged environment.”

“We all have inherent & inalienable rights to pure water, clean air & a healthy environment, according to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. Science, facts and experiences in our communities where shale gas extraction is happening make clear that these environmental rights cannot be honored if PA allows fracking to continue. Governor Wolf, as he takes his oath of office as the leader of the Commonwealth, must honor his commitment to protect the environment by stopping fracking in Pennsylvania,” said Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper, Delaware Riverkeeper Network.

Wes Gillingham, a New York activist with Catskill Mountainkeeper stated, "High volume fracking has been banned in NY. How did it happen? It wasn't a back room deal or individual hero; it wasn't a big organization or politician flexing their might. There is a Ban in New York for the same reason the people here will change the course of history - hundreds and thousands of ordinary people who see the dangers of fracking and refuse to let the gas industry trash the state they love."

Others focused on Governor Wolf's campaign platforms and what they saw as a disappointing response to New York's ban.

"Governor Wolf has repeatedly expressed his opposition to fracking our state forests and parks, citing 'an exhaustive study' that pointed to the irreparable harm it would cause," said Karen Feridun, Founder of Berks Gas Truth. "Hundreds of peer-reviewed studies point to harms to our health, safety, and environment that extend far beyond the bounds of our public lands. Which Pennsylvania community is less important than a state forest? Whose child is less precious than a stream or a tree? If Governor Wolf can't answer those questions, then his choice is clear. He must halt fracking."

"I'm disappointed in Governor Wolf's lack of due diligence towards gas drilling in the Marcellus," said Briget Shields, Founding Member of Marcellus Protest, the grassroots group based in Pittsburgh. "Dr. Howard Zucker, New York's Health Commissioner, determined it's too risky for the people of New York, so how can it be safe for the people of Pennsylvania?"

Jenny Lisak of Pennsylvania Alliance for Clean Water and Air said, "Rather than support a poisonous, toxic, explosive greenhouse gas spewing industry and the administration that wants it to succeed, the fracktivists are putting their passion to work turning this planetary ship around before there's a head on collision, with no survivors."

"We are marching today to show Governor Wolf the strength of the movement against fracking," said Sam Bernhardt, Senior Pennsylvania Organizer for Food & Water Watch. "Pennsylvania needs a halt to fracking; we are going to organize communities around the state until we achieve that goal," said Sam Bernhardt, Senior Pennsylvania Organizer for Food & Water Watch.

###

Pennsylvanians Against Fracking is a statewide coalition of groups representing a diversity of issues, backgrounds and locations, united in the mission of achieving a ban on fracking in the Commonwealth.

<http://www.paagainstfracking.org>