



For Immediate Release
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Tens of Thousands of N.Y., N.J., Pa. and Del. Leaders and Activists Protest Impending Decision to Allow Controversial Fracking in the Delaware River Watershed

Nov. 21 Decision Would Allow Tens of Thousands of Fracking Wells in Delaware River Basin; Risk Drinking Water Source of Over 15 Million

[Trenton] On Monday, leaders of the organized labor, faith-based, sportsmen, business, national organizations and college/university populations from the states that make up the Delaware River Watershed - New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware - held a press conference at the New Jersey Statehouse asking that Governor Christie, as a voting member of the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC), vote against regulations that would allow controversial gas drilling in the Delaware River Basin for the first time. The groups delivered a letter from over 60 New Jersey legislators calling for a continued moratorium and letters from 71,424 citizens. Gas drilling and the use of the new, largely unregulated practice of hydraulic fracturing, or (fracking), could pollute the Delaware River - a drinking water source to over 15 million people living in the region.

"We are at one of the defining moments of our time and for our region -- will we trade the water, air, food and health of thousands of communities and millions of people to smash gas from the ancient rocks for a false promise of cheap energy? The DRBC has attempted to put forth a politically palatable set of regulations; but it has not put forth a protective or even defensible set of regulations. It is upon Governor Christie, the other Governors of our region, and the President, to reject these regulations, and the concept of drilling in the Delaware River Basin. Any other path is a conscious choice to doom our communities and our children to unhealthy water, dirty air, damaged health, and a severely degraded future," **said Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper.**

Fracking to extract natural gas involves injecting large quantities of water, sand and over 600 chemicals underground to break up shale and rock. Many of the chemicals are known carcinogens. The resulting

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wastewater is toxic; ten times more toxic than that produced by oil extraction, according to the U.S. Department of Energy, and no treatment facilities exist to remove all of these pollutants. Numerous studies by government bodies, universities and media outlets have documented fracking's adverse impacts on public health, air quality, waterways, and drinking water.

“The Governor needs to vote no and stand up for the drinking water of the people of New Jersey. By voting for these rules Governor Christie will threaten the drinking water for 15 million people. The Commission has done the rules before the science. The rules were weak and now they have made them worse without public scrutiny. The people on New Jersey, state Legislators, and businesses all want the Governor to vote no. Governor Christie needs to stand up for New Jersey, not the oil and gas lobby,” **said Jeff Tittel, Director, NJ Sierra Club.** “We need everyone to show up on November 21 to demand a NO vote from our Governor.”

National and local groups, legislative officials and activists have opposed the DRBC regulations, which will receive a final vote on Nov. 21. The regulations would lift a 3-year moratorium and allow between 18,000 and 64,000 fracking wells to be placed in the Delaware River Basin, opening New Jersey and New York up to horizontal fracking for the first time, bringing more fracking to Pennsylvania and exposing Delaware, the most downstream state in the Basin, to water quality degradation, coastal disruption, threats to the Delaware Bay's oyster habitat, and sprawling gas pipelines and related infrastructure.

“We are always told that the decisions we make concerning the land and water must be made with extreme caution, because how we move not only affects our lives, but the lives of our children, their children, and so on. That is why we always say we must think of the next 7 generations to come, because what we do affects their lives. I urge the D.R.B.C. to consider these words and do the right thing,” **said Lenape Chief Chuck Gentle Moon DeMund.**

Fracking in Pennsylvania has already caused numerous problems. A blowout at a Chesapeake Energy gas well in Bradford County, Pa. in April 2011 forced the evacuation of seven families from their farms and caused toxic fracking wastewater to flow into a nearby stream. In nearby Dimock, Pa., fracking chemicals have contaminated the drinking water, leading to a public health crisis and numerous spills and accidents have dumped chemicals into creeks there. The PA Department of Environmental Protection website reports that in 2010 there were 2,759 violations of environmental permits by drillers, about 7.5 per day; this year through September 2011 there have been 2,859 violations – that's about 10.5 per day, nothing short of an environmental calamity.

“The opposition to fracking voiced by the community leaders who have signed these letters and individuals who have signed these petitions is felt by people all over New Jersey and throughout the region. It is the job of elected officials like Governor Christie and the other commissioners to look at the facts, listen to the public and take action. Given the dangers posed by fracking and the massive public opposition, the only reasonable action is for the members of the DRBC to reject any regulations that would allow fracking in this critical watershed,” **said Jim Walsh, eastern region director for Food & Water Watch.**

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