For Immediate Release
December 5, 2012

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Delaware River Basin Commission Rejects Petition to Review Pipelines

West Trenton, NJ: In response to a request for a hearing submitted on August 9 and a petition submitted on September 12 by the Delaware Riverkeeper Network and signed on to by 52 environmental, civic, community and faith organizations (list below) the Delaware River Basin Commission officially rejected the request that it exercise its existing authority over pipelines.

There are 13 new pipeline projects (including expansions) proposed for portions of the Delaware River watershed. There is no state or federal agency that is considering the cumulative impact of all of these new projects. The DRBC is the one agency that has the jurisdiction and mission that would support a cumulative impacts assessment and ensure compliance with special protection water regulations of the agency.

“DRBC’s decision not to review pipeline projects is pure cowardice; the agency is more interested in protecting contributions to its budget from the states than carrying forth the mission for which it was created, which is to protect the water resources of the Delaware River Basin for us all, not the gas drillers and pipeline companies,” said Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper, of the decision made. “Pipelines are a known and growing source of air pollution that is contributing to climate change, to water pollution from polluted runoff, and to the devastation of wetlands, streams, and healthy forests critical for flood and species protection. They are also responsible for the increased taking of private and public lands through the exercise and/or threat of their eminent domain authority. They are the big bully partners of the gas drillers and it is sad to see the DRBC duck their responsibilities.”

According to a map created to be handed out by the Delaware Riverkeeper Network at the meeting, new pipelines and expansions are proposed to cut through the counties of:

- Berks, Chester, Delaware, Lebanon, Monroe, Montgomery, Pike, Schuylkill, and Wayne, Counties in Pennsylvania;
- Gloucester, Hunterdon and Sussex Counties in New Jersey;
- New Castle and Kent Counties in Delaware; and
- Broome, Delaware, Orange and Sullivan Counties in New York.
In addition to the petition with the sign-ons of 52 organizations, 12 Pennsylvania legislators submitted their letters urging the DRBC to exercise its jurisdiction including Representative Greg Vitali, Representative John Galloway, Representative Mark Cohen, Representative Mike O’Brien, Representative Phyllis Mundy, Representative Michael Sturla, Representative Matt Bradford, Representative Pam DeLissio, Representative Tina Davis, Representative Harry Readshaw, Representative Brendan Boyle, Representative Margo Davidson.

Organizations that signed on to the petition submitted by the Delaware Riverkeeper Network include:

Aquashicola / Pohopoco Watershed Conservancy  
Blue Mountain Preservation Association, Inc.  
Brandywine Conservancy Brandywine Watershed Regeneration Initiative  
Bus for Progress  
Catskill Citizens for Safe Energy  
Catskill Mountainkeeper  
Citizens for a Clean Pompton Lakes  
Citizens United to Protect the Maurice River and its Tributaries  
Clean Ocean Action  
Climate Mama LLC  
Coalition Against the Rockaway Pipeline  
Coastal Monmouth Democratic Club  
Cross County Clean Air Coalition  
CWA Local 1081  
Damascus Citizens for Sustainability  
Delaware Chapter of the Sierra Club  
Delaware River Greenway Partnership  
Earthworks  
Environment New Jersey  
Food and Water Watch  
Frack Action  
Grassroots Coalition for Environmental and Economic Justice  
Green Party of Camden County  
Green Party of Essex/Passaic Counties  
Green Party of Philadelphia  
GreenLine Paper Company, Inc.  
Guardians of the Brandywine, Inc.  
Lakeland Unitarian Universalist Fellowship  
Multi-State Alliance Preserving Lasting Energy (M.A.P.L.E.)  
National Resources Defense Council (NRDC)  
New Jersey Highlands Coalition  
NJ Environmental Federation  
NJ Sierra Club  
NO Gas Pipeline  
North Jersey Pipeline Walkers  
North Jersey Public Policy Network  
NY Friends of Clearwater  
NYH20, Inc.  
Pasack Sustainability Group  
Peach Bottom Concerned Citizens Group  
Pennsylvania Alliance for Clean Water and Air  
Physicians for Social Responsibility Philadelphia  
Pipeline Safety Coalition  
Protecting Our Waters  
Raritan Headwaters Association  
Raymond Proffit Foundation  
Save Cummins Hill  
ShaleTest.org  
Stop The Pipeline  
United for Action