



For Immediate Release
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Testimony Given in DRN lawsuit exposes PADEP negligence

Bristol, PA – Attorneys for Delaware Riverkeeper Network (DRN) and Damascus Citizens for Sustainability (DCS) took testimony from PA Department of Environmental Protection staff regarding their review and approval of a drilling permit issued for a natural gas well in Damascus Township, Wayne County, PA, which was appealed to the Environmental Hearing Board by DRN and DCS (Damascus Citizens for Sustainability, Inc., et al v. PA DEP, et al., EHB Docket No. 2010-102-M). Transcripts of the depositions from the case are available at <http://www.delawariverkeeper.org/resources/Testimonies/drbc%20submission-ltr%204-12-11.PDF>

The case concerns the Woodlands Management project, a Marcellus shale gas well in Damascus Township, Wayne County, PA that was “grandfathered” by the Delaware River Basin Commission so that it could be drilled even though a moratorium is in place in the Basin. The deponents were Mary Slye, Craig Lobins, Brian Thomas Babb and Joseph F. Lichtinger; these were the four DEP personnel who were involved in the permit approval for the Woodlands Management project. As these transcripts help demonstrate, the Delaware River Basin Commission’s (DRBC) reliance on state regulators fails to meet the DRBC’s responsibilities. PADEP spends as little as 32 minutes on a permit review and in this case did not even consider that the gas well was to be located on a High Quality stream, Hollister Creek, and less than ½ mile from the Wild and Scenic Upper Delaware River. The transcripts were filed as public comment with the DRBC regarding their proposed natural gas regulations by DRN. The interrogatories were submitted as evidence of the lack of needed gas drilling

oversight and regulation by PADEP; in the proposed gas rules, DRBC defers to PADEP in many areas of regulation, saying the state is providing enough controls. The issuance of drilling permits is one area the DRBC acquiesces to the states.

“The lack of technical oversight applied by PADEP and the neglect of basic anti-degradation issues painfully illustrate that Pennsylvania is churning out gas well drilling permits as fast as possible, glossing over the most fundamental environmental aspects of a review such as proximity to special protection waters,” said Tracy Carluccio, Deputy Director of Delaware Riverkeeper Network. “How can anyone feel safe if PADEP is asleep at the wheel like this? Certainly the DRBC cannot sit back and ignore this lack of proper regulation,” continued Carluccio. “This kind of disregard by the environmental agency in charge of drilling in the State is scandalous; no wonder there are so many accidents and pollution incidents across the Commonwealth”, concluded Carluccio.

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