

For Immediate Release

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Pennsylvania Groups Express Concerns over Fracking Fluids in Flood Water *Demand Disclosure of Chemicals and Number of Well Pads in Floodplains*

Harrisburg, PA—As tropical storm Lee continues to dump massive amounts of rain throughout Pennsylvania, concerns are growing over natural gas drilling pits overflowing and spilling their toxic contents into flooded creeks, streams and rivers. There are no current safeguards in place by the State of Pennsylvania to prevent natural gas drilling and the placing of open pits containing toxic fracking fluids in flood plains. The groups call on the DEP to immediately disclose to the public and emergency response professionals how many wells are located within the floodplain, how many may have potentially leaked into our waterways, and what types of chemicals residents and emergency responders may have come in contact with.

Pennsylvania Environmental groups released the following statements in reaction to the heavy rainfall and potential for contaminated flood regions:

“Given the significant flooding over the past several days, there is much concern over how many well pads, open pits and chemical storage tank fields have been inundated with toxic chemicals washing into our waterways and flooded communities,” states Jeff Schmidt, Director with the Sierra Club Pennsylvania Chapter. “It is imperative that the PA DEP not allow natural gas wells and infrastructure to be located in floodplains.”

"The human devastation experienced by flooding is largely the result of bad decision making - building in the wrong place and the wrong way," said Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper. "Because we have once again put the priorities of industry above the health, safety and protection of people, which includes protecting the environment that feeds and sustains them. We have created a catastrophic situation - and the damage we see here will far surpass what we are able to see with our eyes, the chemical slurry of the drillers will spread its poison, becoming an insidious and unseen threat that will cause sickness and harm for years to come."

"We can only assume that the runoff from gas well sites during this terrible flooding is a toxic flood," said Tracy Carluccio, Deputy Director of DRN. "PA should shut down all drilling now and must immediately revise its regulations to prohibit any gas well development within the floodplains adjacent riparian areas, for the sake of public health and safety."

B. Arrindell, Director of Damascus Citizens for Sustainability, said, "We have verified that there is a spreading oil slick in the Wyalusing area along the flooding Susquehanna River. This is indicative of not just oils, but also all the chemicals being used and released materials brought to the surface by the drilling that are now being spread everywhere the flood waters travel. This has profound ongoing health implications for everyone living, working, farming or visiting the area. Pennsylvanians are being denied their constitutional right to a clean environment"

"While the industry mouths rhetoric about 'safe and responsible' drilling, they do the absolute opposite in fact, storing hundreds of millions of gallons of toxic flowback fluid in open frack pits, now flowing into floodwaters," said Iris Marie Bloom, director of Protecting Our Waters. "Fracking fluid chemicals, and even worse, the radioactive materials, arsenic and other deadly contaminants brought up from the deep shale, should never come into contact with air, water or earth. But here they are flowing with flood waters irreversibly into our ecosystem. This is a public health disaster in the making. Not one more fracking permit should be issued. All open frack pits must be permanently abolished and life-cycle cumulative impact studies done."

Nature Abounds President Melinda Hughes-Wert commented on the situation, "Prior to the epic flooding, we already knew that toxic water from the wells was seeping into our waterways through inefficient containment ponds placed in mountainous topography. Now with the epic flooding, we have even more toxic chemicals in our ground and surface waters. This is truly a significant problem for the commonwealth and it should be addressed by our officials with urgency. Anything less, is an insult to the intelligence of the citizens of Pennsylvania."

"The devastating flooding occurring in Pennsylvania is just another chilling reminder that we are all downstream of poorly regulated, poorly understood, and inherently dangerous natural gas drilling operations. Natural gas drilling in Pennsylvania needs to stop," said Karen Feridun, Founder of Berks Gas Truth.

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