

## ***Delaware Riverkeeper Network ~ others orgs in order of sign on***

Delaware River Basin Commission  
West Trenton, NJ

Dear Commissioners,

We call upon the Delaware River Basin Commission to enact a permanent ban on all gas development, including drilling and fracking, in the Delaware River Watershed.

The Delaware River Basin Commission currently prohibits permitting for natural gas extraction projects in the Delaware River Basin. This prohibition was put in place in May 2010 by the Commission based on the determination that natural gas projects, individually or cumulatively, will have a substantial impact on the water resources of the Delaware River Watershed.

As the federal-interstate agency formed in 1961 to manage the water resources of the Watershed, the Commission members – the Governors of Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, and Delaware and the federal government – represent the public's interests. Chief among the Commission's responsibilities is protecting the water supply of 17 million people, including New York City and Philadelphia.

As you know, the Wild and Scenic Delaware River is classified as Special Protection Waters (SPW) due to exceptionally high water quality and outstanding natural resources with special regulations that protect those resources and maintain the River's exceptional water quality. The entire drainage area that flows to the nontidal Delaware River, which extends from Hancock NY to Trenton NJ, is designated as SPW, and is the longest stretch of anti-degradation waters in the nation. The Commission's mandated protection of these resources provides the foundational authority for the drilling moratorium.

When the commission enacted the moratorium three main concerns were cited – the diminishment of **surface and groundwater**, the release of **pollution**, and the impacts of frack **waste** disposal.<sup>1</sup> In the intervening years, a substantial body of knowledge has developed demonstrating significant evidence that shale gas development has myriad adverse effects on our water, forest, air, land, public health, property interests, and agriculture, effecting present and future generations.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.nj.gov/drbc/programs/natural/>

<sup>2</sup> PSE Healthy Energy Library, [https://www.zotero.org/groups/pse\\_study\\_citation\\_database/items](https://www.zotero.org/groups/pse_study_citation_database/items); See Compendium, <http://concernedhealthny.org/compendium/>; Delaware Riverkeeper Network, "Unsafe and Unsustainable," [http://www.delawariverkeeper.org/Documents/DRN\\_Report\\_Unsafe+Unsustainable\\_fr.pdf](http://www.delawariverkeeper.org/Documents/DRN_Report_Unsafe+Unsustainable_fr.pdf)

After exhaustive study, the State of New York prohibited fracking based on environmental and public health analysis. The NY Department of Health concluded that the overall weight of the evidence demonstrated the likelihood of the occurrence of adverse health outcomes and environmental impacts from fracking could not be prevented, leading to the Governor's decision to ban high volume high fracturing in the state.

The Commission has not conducted a comprehensive assessment of the cumulative and long-term impacts of shale gas development that illustrates that natural gas development from shale could safely occur within the Delaware River Basin without degradation of the Watershed's water resources and the essential values of Special Protection Waters. In fact, the evidence supports that shale gas cannot be extracted or developed safely with current technology.

And so we call upon the Delaware River Basin Commission to enact a permanent ban on natural gas development in the Delaware River Watershed for the protection of our water resources (surface, ground and wetland) and to preserve the outstanding and essential values of the Delaware River and its Watershed, for the benefit of all our communities, including generations yet to come.

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