



Statement of Citizens for Pennsylvania's Future on DRBC's Proposal to Draft Regulations regarding Natural Gas Development Activities

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Hello, my name is Abby Jones and I am the Northeast PA Staff Attorney for PennFuture, a state-wide, public interest membership organization dedicated to creating a just future where the environment, communities, and the economy thrive. Much of my work concerns the protection of the water quality of the Upper Delaware River and the health of the communities and environment in the Basin.

I would like to thank the Commission for their vote today to approve the Resolution directing the drafting of regulations that would prohibit the production of natural gas through horizontal hydraulic fracturing methods within the Delaware River Basin. After almost a decade of a “de facto” moratorium, we commend the Commission for taking the next step to make that ban permanent.

We believe that the DRBC has both the authority and the scientific and factual support to enact a formal ban on fracking activities in the Delaware River Basin. The lack of industrial development in the Upper Delaware River is one of the main things that has helped protect the water quality of the watershed, and the potential impacts to the watershed from fracking operations could undo decades’ worth of the hard work of the DRBC.

Yet we have serious concerns about the rest of the Resolution: namely the apparent allowance for the storage, treatment, disposal and discharge of frack wastewater and the inter-basin transfer of water and wastewater.

Seven years ago, the DRBC rightfully recognized the potential irreversible significant environmental and water quality impacts from fracking in the Basin, which went beyond the impacts from the drilling operations themselves, and specifically included (1) the potential pollution from the disposal and treatment of frack flowback wastewater, and (2) the impacts from reduced volume of water available to other purposes such as drinking water supply, aquatic life, and recreation. These concerns were enough to cause the Commission to pause in approving regulations on fracking activities in the Basin at that time.

Those concerns have seemingly – and unfortunately – fallen by the wayside, and allowing these activities in the Basin could jeopardize the almost billion dollar river recreational economy and the drinking water supply of over 15 million people.

Thus, PennFuture supports a full and complete ban on all fracking activities – including wastewater and water transfer activities – within the Delaware River Basin. The draft regulations that will come from today’s resolution appear to fall woefully short of the necessary and required protections mandated to the Commission’s authority. PennFuture plans to engage in the public comment process once those draft regulations are issued to ensure that the Commission is fulfilling its mission to “act as stewards of the Basin’s water resources.”

Thank you.

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