

Borough of Mount Penn

"The Friendly Borough"

John A. Becker Municipal Building
200 North Twenty-Fifth Street
Mount Penn, Reading, PA 19606-2091
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MOUNT PENN BOROUGH RESOLUTION NO. 23-18

WHEREAS, a fundamental purpose of government is to protect the health, safety, and welfare of citizens; and

WHEREAS, Article I, Section 27 of the Pennsylvania Constitution affirms that, "The people have a right to clean air, pure water, and to the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic and esthetic values of the environment"; and

WHEREAS, Article I, Section 27 further declares, "Pennsylvania's public natural resources are the common property of all the people, including generations yet to come. As trustee of these resources, the Commonwealth shall conserve and maintain them for the benefit of all the people"; and

WHEREAS, in the most recent statistical analysis of the body of scientific literature by the Concerned Health Professionals of New York and Physicians for Social Responsibility, 685 peer-reviewed papers examining gas drilling and/or hydraulic fracturing ("fracking") were reviewed and the overwhelming majority of studies found evidence of or potential adverse impacts on water, air, and human health; and

WHEREAS, the negative impacts of shale gas development are documented by Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's accounting of 295 private water well contamination cases that were determined by the agency to have been caused by oil and gas operations¹; and

WHEREAS, the EPA's most recently released fracking study provides scientific evidence that fracking activities can impact drinking water resources and includes water impacts from shale gas in the Pennsylvania community of Dimock; and

WHEREAS, there is significant evidence that shale gas development, and its related operations which include all the phases of the fracking process from the first stage of industrial land preparation; to the storage, handling and use of chemicals and additives for extraction and stimulation; to drilling and fracking; to the withdrawal of and degradation of large volumes of water and its discharge and disposal as waste, has adverse effects on public health, property interests, agriculture and on our air, water, and land; and

WHEREAS, neither Pennsylvania nor the Delaware River Basin Commission has conducted a comprehensive assessment of the cumulative and long-term impacts of fracking and related shale gas development activities on the water resources of the Basin; and

WHEREAS, the absence of such an assessment prevents the appropriate management of and avoidance of degradation from the harms associated with shale gas development, including risks to public health, property values and the clean air and water upon which all citizens and businesses depend; and

WHEREAS, the shale gas industry has received unprecedented exemptions from our nation's most important environmental and public health laws including the Safe Drinking Water Act, Clean Air Act, and the Clean Water Act; and

WHEREAS, after exhaustive study, New York has prohibited high-volume hydraulic fracturing and Maryland has prohibited all fracking in their states; and

WHEREAS, shale gas development in the watershed has highly significant cumulative climate impacts. Natural gas is primarily methane, a greenhouse gas 86 times more efficient at trapping heat than carbon over a 20 year time frame² and its effects persist for hundreds of years. The well documented vented and fugitive losses from natural gas systems contribute to atmospheric warming; current technology and practices have not controlled these releases. The emissions from shale gas development are so great that it is projected that their release from the build out of Pennsylvania's Marcellus shale will prevent the achievement of global warming goals in the state, accelerating climate change. Climate change impacts on the basin's water resources include changes in precipitation and runoff that increase flooding and drought, impairment of habitats and water quality (including salt water intrusion to Delaware Estuary water supplies) and sea level rise; and

WHEREAS, the Delaware River Basin Commission has in place a moratorium that currently prohibits all natural gas development, including drilling, fracking, wastewater processing and discharges from and water withdrawals for drilling and fracking operations, throughout the Delaware River Basin; and

WHEREAS, the Borough supports the continuation of these DRBC prohibitions; and

WHEREAS, the Delaware River Basin Commission is actively considering draft regulations that include the possibility of "prohibitions related to the production of natural gas utilizing horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracturing within the Basin", but also the allowance for "...storage, treatment, disposal and/or discharge of wastewater within the basin associated with horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracturing for the production of natural gas where permitted" and "...the inter-basin transfer of water and wastewater for purposes of natural gas development where permitted"; and


WHEREAS, the Borough considers that the weight of evidence shows that natural gas development and its operations cannot be done safely and/or without degrading the exceptional water quality of the Delaware River and tributary streams;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that:

1. The Borough calls upon the Delaware River Basin Commission to enact a complete and permanent ban on natural gas development and hydraulic fracturing and all related activities (including drilling, fracking, wastewater processing and discharges from and water withdrawals for drilling and fracking operations) throughout the Basin.
2. That an official copy of this resolution be filed with the Delaware River Basin Commission, 25 Cosey Road, P.O. Box 7360, West Trenton, NJ 08628-0360

Borough of Mount Penn

ATTEST:



Josh Nowotarski, Mayor



Thomas Staron, Council President

Date: 2/13/18



Christeena Hauck, Secretary