

Comment by NYSBC

Comment on Proposed DRBC Draft Regulations Addressing Hydraulic Fracturing and Additional Clarifying Amendments

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My name is Hilary Baum. I am a resident of New York and have enjoyed and relied on the benefits of the Catskill/ Delaware Watershed for most of my life. I am here representing the New York Sustainable Business Council. We are the NYS affiliate of the American Sustainable Business Council, an organization of more than 250,000 independent businesses.

NYSBC successfully mobilized businesses statewide to participate in the citizens' movement to ban fracking in New York which included the Chefs for the Marcellus campaign and the Businesses Against Fracking NY initiative. We are grateful to Governor Cuomo for putting a statewide ban into law in NY and for his recent vote to approve a proposed ban for the Delaware River Watershed.

However, while we in NY were able to celebrate our success in keeping fracking out of our state, we are still engaged in protecting NY statewide from the public health threats associated with fracking waste activities...except in NYC where it is use and distribution is now prohibited.

Clearly, the DRBC has recognized the dangers of fracking in the Delaware River watershed which is why this ban is being proposed. But the Commission's ban as proposed is incomplete and inadequate because it would allow the storage, treatment and disposal of fracking wastewater within the watershed PLUS the withdrawal of water from the watershed for fracking elsewhere. It is not good enough. Knowingly adding stress to the drinking water resource for 15 million people is dangerous and morally unacceptable.

These activities must be permanently prohibited if the long term health of the watershed, its quality and quantity, is truly of value to the Commission.

Why are business leaders concerned about fracking?

- Fracking and fracking waste endanger public health, the environment and the economy.
- Fracking and its related activities place burdens on business.
- Fracking and its related activities are not the key to a stable, sustainable economy.
- If fracking, fracking waste activities and water withdrawals are permitted in the Delaware River Basin, short term economic advantages that benefit the oil and gas companies will perpetuate an unlevel playing field for business efforts committed to long term sustainability.

- Fracking, and its related activities, creates industrialized landscapes and is incompatible with regional economic drivers such as tourism, sustainable agriculture, food and beverage production, and outdoor recreation, all of which depend on natural amenities and shared resources. It impacts property values.
- It impacts business when employees and their families experience health problems associated with fracking and its related activities by causing higher healthcare costs, increased workplace absenteeism, and reduced productivity.
- Business of all kinds are being confronted with extreme and unpredictable climate events, and we know that fracking and the production of its waste products are associated with climate change, posing challenges to business such as supply chain disruption, damaged infrastructure, increases in insurance costs, decreases in property values, delays, closings, and lost revenues.
- Existing laws regulating fracking are inadequate and the gas and oil industry is exempt from major environmental laws. Instead, taxpayers, including businesses, are forced to shoulder most or all of the immediate and long-term costs associated with contamination, road and infrastructure repair, and the increased demand for public and emergency services.
- And jobs generated by fracking activities in the watershed, historically underestimated, will follow the same pattern as elsewhere and most will be outsourced to skilled workers outside the community.

What is needed instead of an outmoded, polluting fossil fuel based economy is a flourishing economy based on energy efficiency, conservation, and clean, renewable energy, an economy that will continue its record of “creating more jobs per unit of energy than coal or natural gas.”* As the global movement for divestment of fossil fuels from private and public pension funds takes hold as in cities like New York, it is becoming crystal clear that the transition away from fossil fuels is mandatory to protect the future for all.

Our country needs a full ban on fracking.

Our region needs a complete ban on fracking that includes fracking waste activities and water withdrawals in the Delaware River Basin.

* *The Business Case for Rethinking Fracking*, 2015, American Sustainable Business Council

NEW YORK SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS COUNCIL (NYSBC)

is an alliance of businesses and business organizations

committed to advancing a vibrant, just, and sustainable economy in New York State.

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