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I am against fracking in the Delaware River basin because it has far too many negative effects and the few positives (such as economic gain for few landowners) is not enough to sacrifice such an important water source. Fracking operations are being researched across the country, as landowners have to reckon with the various negative effects of fracking. What's more is that fracking doesn't just have environmental, social or public health impacts; it affects all of these things and in ways that can't be easily resolved. Hydraulic fracking "unsettles social, economic and ecological landscapes." (Willow & Wylie 2014) Agencies at various levels have to deal with the enormous numbers of permits required for permits and provide services to the local communities where extraction takes place. Landowners on the other hand have to deal with a bureaucracy that would rather respond to hazards after they have happened (such as chemical spills on private properties) than prevent them in the first place. (Willow & Wylie 2014) This isn't the only social issue faced by landowners. A study recently found a reduction on bid values for homes located in proximity to fracking operations, at least a 5%-15% reduction, which increases the economic burden on landowners. (Throupe 2013) Fracking operations also bring transient populations into small towns and with an increased population there is a need for infrastructure, leading to the construction of housing as well as an increase in the number of alcohol-related crimes, traffic accidents and increased rates of sexually transmitted diseases. (Hauter 2016) But these workers don't stay forever and eventually leave the small towns, leaving behind infrastructure and "ghost town" feel.

Fracking operations also require the construction of roads in otherwise undisturbed environments, other associated infrastructure such as well pads and pipelines, water extraction stations and increased truck traffic, which can all have adverse impacts on the local communities and the environment. (Burton et al. 2014) Fracking operations can severely impact the quantity and quality of water sources. It is a water reliant industry and between 5%-50% of the water returns to the surface. But most of this water is wastewater and needs to be treated. In the U.S. alone, 2.4 billion gallons of wastewater is generated everyday from oil and gas wells. (Hauter 2016) The chemicals associated with fracking can contaminate water sources and cause health problems for people drinking or using the water. It also poses a risk to aquatic ecosystems leading to loss of stream riparian zones and altered biogeochemical cycling. (Burton et al. 2014) Higher mercury levels have also been found in aquatic organisms in fracked sites compared to non-fracked sites. (Grant et al. 2015)

Given all the issues surrounding fracking operations, I believe it is against the public's interest to allow fracking and as a result, all fracking operations should be banned in the Delaware River basin. The river provides drinking water to at least 15 million people and jeopardizing this water source is not worth it for the few economic gains only a handful of landowners may enjoy.

### Sources

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