

Fairfax Hutter

I am OPPOSED to fracking in the Delaware River Basin. I am particularly OPPOSED to ANY toxic wastewater storage, processing, and discharge into the waters of the Delaware including tributaries and headwaters.

While many presume hydraulic fracturing to be "safe" because of the depth of the wells, Pennsylvania is underlain by layer upon layer of heavily fractured sedimentary rock including extensive fissile shales. Not inconceivable that fracking fluids, or waste water injected under pressure, could eventually migrate upwards through a vast network of fractures and faults into ground water aquifers that ultimately feed wells, seeps, and streams.

We are only now learning that earthquakes in Oklahoma are not just triggered by deep injection wells, but are also associated with hydraulic fracturing: "Parts of Oklahoma now have the same earthquake risk as California — and a new study found a scarily direct link to fracking"— Science, Feb. 2, 2018. <http://www.businessinsider.com/earthquakes-fracking-oklahoma-research-2018-2>

Lowered stream flows throughout the Delaware River Basin can ill afford to lose the enormous 5-10 million gallons of water per well required by hydraulic fracturing. Heavily drilled Susquehanna River Basin suffers low stream flows and river impairment. Water withdrawals from surface waterways have the potential to deplete downstream groundwater resources if set based on pass-by flows that do not take seasonality into account, including local benefits of high flows such as springtime flows or heavy precipitation events. Such a withdrawal may downstream cause some additional discharge from the aquifer to make up the loss of stream flow. This additional base flow will be contributed by shallow groundwater downstream of the withdrawal site, impacting aquifers. This presents the potential for loss of groundwater reserves that will discharge to the stressed waterway to maintain base flow that was lost to the withdrawal

The Delaware River watershed would also suffer from the extensive forest fragmentation created by Marcellus and Utica Shale operations. The new access roads, well pads, and pipelines would harm Pennsylvania's ecologically vital and unique Pocono plateau forests. New study just released this summer demonstrates harmful long term impacts to forests from pipelines. When forests suffer, water quality suffers.

PADEP is already incapable of policing and enforcing existing oil & gas activities in the Susquehanna River Basin, they cannot possibly oversee new ones in the Delaware.

The DRBC members – the Governors of Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, and Delaware, and the federal government – have the responsibility of protecting the shared waters that provide 15-17 million people in all four of the Watershed states with drinking water, including New York City and Philadelphia.

The Delaware River was designated as a national Wild and Scenic River by Congress because of its outstanding features, irreplaceable resources, exceptional water quality and scenic and recreational value. These prized assets provide important economic benefit to all four states whose tributaries flow to the Delaware River. These values are gravely jeopardized by fracking and its polluting operations and must be protected for the public and future generations.

The entire nontidal Delaware River is protected by DRBC's Special Protection Waters regulations

that do not allow water quality to be diminished in any way. We are dependent on that protection to keep our water safe.

PLEASE DO NOT APPROVE ANY FRACKING OR ACCEPT FRACKING WASTE WATER into the Delaware River Basin.