

Written comments to The DRBC from Kenneth Maher

Thank you allowing me the opportunity to present my reasons why Hydraulic Fracturing and any of the procedures associated with it must not ever be allowed to encroach further within the Delaware basin and Keystone state in its entirety.

With the advancement of technologies and techniques to obtain natural gas and oil from within the bedrock of this great nation has come with it the undeniable side effects and potentially lethal consequences to both wildlife and humans. While Hydraulic Fracturing is in its relative infancy, the overwhelming body of evidence suggests we have already gone too far and so we must take heed and halt the advance that benefits a few energy companies at the enormous expense of the folks of not only Pennsylvania, but the entire planet as well.

First let me start by saying that Fracking rigs are a real eyesore and they totally detract from the natural beauty that has been bestowed on Pennsylvania. The Keystone state has a rugged beauty in its Northeastern tier that is very unique and appealing. To the homeowner, it is a fabulous place to live and or retire. To the sportsman, it is a veritable paradise.

This issue at hand is whether to allow Fracking related operations to get closer to arguably the greatest river in the USA, the Delaware and its surrounding creeks, rivers and tributaries.

The huge amounts of water required to allow fracking to take place in itself sends up a huge red flag. This water is lost to the planet and the sheer volume required has grown from about 5 million gallons per site to over ten million gallons and above for larger bores. Removal of this amount of water per site poses threats that are large in the short term and when compounded with climate change present a dire situation for the people of the Northeastern US. It takes well over one thousand trucks to deliver and remove the water from a fracking site. That is over 1000 chances for a truck, loaded with wastewater to be involved in an accident or to careen off of a road and into a creek where its contents could potentially destroy not only that creek, but the river it feeds which could very well be the Delaware. Wastewater has such a plethora of highly toxic substances

within it that there should be a 500 year moratorium on it being any closer than it already is to the Delaware River. It is shameful that there is no management of the mixes of chemicals that are currently being injected into the ground to break up the shale. With this fact should come an overly aggressive management strategy of the safe zone between the fracking sites and the Delaware River. If a spill should occur near the Delaware, its impact could literally be disastrous to over 15 million people who rely on the river for drinking water. Climate change will only serve to deplete the most needed resource on this planet. We should collectively manage water like our lives depend on it because frankly they do.

Water removal from Northeastern Pennsylvania also will have a very negative effect on birds, fish and wildlife that cannot be accurately gauged because of the lack of long term studies. Short term studies point definitively to the degradation of fish and wildlife populations near fracking sites. Water quality is suffering already near fracking sites and this will only get worse over time as cement casings fail and even things like minor seismic events will cause fissures in the earth and in fracking bores to allow wastewater to mix with water that is ultimately destined to be utilized by the Delaware and or its residents for the purposes of drinking and bathing etc, etc.

It is incumbent of the DRBC to look at what has happened already in areas like Dimock, PA and in Ohio and Oklahoma and to realize that the safety and health of the people of this country are way more important than a few energy companies reaping a windfall at the expense of a great many individuals.

We are at a cross roads with regards to energy policy in this nation. It is time for green technologies to become the focus of energy policy and investment. Advancing fracking will only shorten the lifespan of this planet. I am 100% certain of this statement. Allowing oil and gas companies to call the shots and have free reign will only intensify the density of fracking operations across the country and serve to slow the advancement of healthy green alternatives that are not only needed, they are truly warranted at this point.

The storage of wastewater is already a huge issue for this country and the burgeoning amount of it used in fracking will only become a bigger headache and environmental issue over time. As we remove the water and look for a safe and accident free means of storage, the sheer transportation of the water itself poses a real and potentially devastating threat. Whether by truck, train or pipeline, accidents can and do happen. We are literally looking at one accident and the Delaware could be ruined forever from the source of the accident all the way down to Delaware Bay and potentially including the Atlantic Ocean as well. This is what we are facing from a single spill perspective. We cannot control what is going on underground but we have considerable control over what occurs above ground. We must remain intensely committed and dedicated to keeping the Delaware Basin clean and pristine because frankly, it was put here for the humans and animals to utilize and benefit from first and foremost.

The monitoring and policing of the companies that frack Pennsylvania needs to be enhanced by leaps and bounds. American big businesses typically will operate at a level that they know they can get away with knowing that they have expert legal teams and deep pockets to shield them from large payouts from negligence and corner-cutting on a daily operational basis. We should be watching these companies way more closely and imposing extremely severe penalties for lax operating procedures and violations of any single portion of the laws determining the extraction of natural gas and oil from the earth beneath Pennsylvania.